AJANTA

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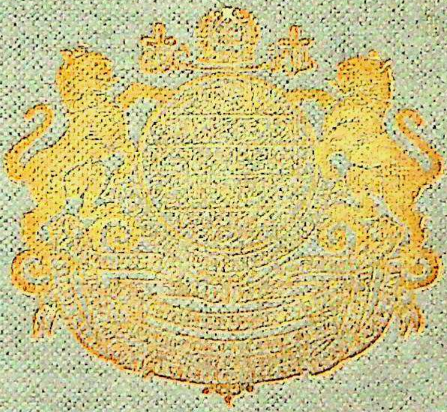

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AJANTA

THE COLOUR AND MONOCHROME REPRODUCTIONS OF THE AJANTA FRESCOES BASED ON PHOTOGRAPHY

With an Explanatory Text by

G. YAZDANI, M.A.
DIRECTOR OF ARCHAEOLOGY, H.E.H. THE NIZAM'S DOMINIONS

and an Introduction by

LAURENCE BINYON
OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

PART I
TEXT

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PREFACE

STUDENTS of Art have already been familiarized with the paintings of Ajanta, first through the excellent copies made by Major R. Gill in earlier days (1844–63), and again through those executed by Mr. John Griffiths and Lady Herringham more recently, and published in splendid volumes—by the former in *The Paintings in the Buddhist Cave Temples of Ajanta*, and by the latter in *The Ajanta Frescoes*. These copies have proved of inestimable value in giving the world a general idea of the paintings, and, being accompanied by most carefully written essays on the history and artistic import of the frescoes, these admirable volumes will long be studied with advantage by every one interested in Indian Art.

Notwithstanding their merits, these copies have not fully satisfied the connoisseur. For one thing the leanings and characteristics of the copyist have crept into them, and for another the technique of the original frescoes has been found too vigorous to be reproduced faithfully in a less pronounced medium. On the latter point the opinion of Lady Herringham, who spent several years in copying the frescoes on the spot, is decisive. She writes: 'In reality the technique of the original work is so sure and perfect that none of us were good enough executants to repeat it,' and further: 'Most of it has a kind of emphatic, passionate force, a marked technical skill, very difficult to suggest in copies done in a slighter medium.'[1]

The Government of His Exalted Highness the Nizam, in whose dominions Ajanta is situated, have evinced no small solicitude to procure *faithful* copies of the frescoes, and in 1915, shortly after the creation of the Archaeological Department at Hyderabad, they were pleased to appoint an artist, Mr. Syed Ahmad, who had received his training under Lady Herringham, to copy the frescoes with greater fidelity to the originals. Mr. Syed Ahmad's efforts in this respect have been crowned with a fair amount of success, for his copies as regards tone are distinctly superior to those made by previous artists. Art enthusiasts, however, have continued to crave for absolutely faithful copies, which they suggest are possible only by a mechanical process, such as colour photography, a method which has made great progress in recent times.

The proposal for the reproduction of the frescoes by colour photography, although most welcome to His Exalted Highness's Government, at first appeared impracticable, for through the neglect of centuries moisture and dirt had formed a crust over the paintings, which it was difficult to remove owing to the varnish which some archaeologists and artists had laid on the paintings with the idea of brightening their detail and safeguarding them from climatic effects. These injudicious measures, although undertaken with good intentions, have, in the course of a quarter of a century, not only made the fine brushwork of the frescoes more indistinct, but have in some cases, where the varnish was of a bad quality (copal) and where the dirt had not been removed beforehand from the fresco, converted the entire painting into a dingy smear. Thanks, however, to the generosity of His Exalted Highness the Nizam, and to the genuine interest and courteous help of the late Lord Curzon, Sir Rennell Rodd, the Ambassador of His Britannic Majesty in Rome, secured two expert *restaurateurs*, Professor Lorenzo Cecconi and Count Orsini, to clean the frescoes from the clotted mass of varnish and dirt which had in some cases affected even the colours beneath. The Italian experts worked at Ajanta for two seasons (1920–1 and 1921–2), and their efforts in cleaning the frescoes proved eminently successful, except in a few places in Caves XVI and XVII, where the varnish had penetrated into the colours and any attempt to remove it resulted in total obliteration of the colours themselves.

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[1] *Ajanta Frescoes*, pp. 17–18.

After the cleaning of the frescoes so far as was practicable, the next step was to bring out to Ajanta an expert in colour photography. In the beginning Mr. O. H. Browne, of the Hyderabad Electricity Department, kindly made some experiments; but later the services of Mr. E. L. Vasey, a British expert, were recommended by Sir John Marshall and Sir Aurel Stein, who, it may be added parenthetically, have advised the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad most willingly at every stage of this scheme. The recommendation was readily accepted by His Exalted Highness's Government, and Mr. Vasey was engaged for five months, during which time he photographed nearly all the frescoes which have survived the ravages of time and have recently been thoroughly conserved.

The negatives prepared by Mr. Vasey form the basis of the plates incorporated in the present publication. The colour-plates have been made and printed by the well-known firm of Messrs. Henry Stone & Son, Ltd., of Banbury and London, while the monochrome plates have been reproduced by the Oxford University Press under the able direction of Mr. John Johnson. The selection of colour subjects has been limited by the requirements of their being distinct in the originals, but the monochrome plates include almost every painting which survives on the rock-walls of Ajanta; and in a few cases, where even the design had been found too far obliterated for reproduction by photography, Mr. Syed Ahmad, our artist, has traced it, to the best of his vision and skill, and his copies are included in the Plates. For purposes of detail some subjects reproduced in colour have been repeated on a larger scale in monochrome, for some authorities consider that the black and white reproductions give a better idea of the original drawing of the frescoes. The work will comprise four parts: the first part, now issued, deals with the frescoes in Cave I only.

It must also be added that reproduction of the frescoes by colour photography, highly costly and difficult as the undertaking was, would never have been accomplished but for the judicious and able handling of the scheme by Sir Akbar Hydari (Nawab Hydar Nawaz Jung Bahadur), first in his capacity as Secretary to His Exalted Highness's Government in the Archaeological Department and later as Finance Member. Sir Akbar Hydari's love for Ajanta has become almost proverbial, and his name will long be associated with the work carried out there during the last decade and a half. It is only right to mention in this connexion also the name of Nawab Akbar Yar Jung Bahadur, the distinguished successor to Sir Akbar Hydari as Secretary to the Government in the Archaeological Department, who has displayed a keen interest in this scheme and has supported it warmly throughout.

As the publication of the Plates would have been incomplete without an explanatory account of the frescoes, I have ventured to describe them; but not in the spirit of an expert in Buddhist lore or as an adept in the technicalities of Art. My acquaintance with them, as Director of Archaeology, Hyderabad, however, is deep and intimate, since I have had to watch and study them unremittingly. The reader, it is hoped, will find the Introductory Essay, written by Mr. Laurence Binyon, than whom there is perhaps no greater authority on the art of the East at the present time, of extraordinary value and interest in appreciating the merits of these marvellous frescoes.

The correction of proofs, on account of the distance between Ajanta and Banbury, has occupied a long time, but the assistance of Mr. Syed Ahmad and the expert knowledge of Mr. J. A. Milne, C.B.E., have proved most useful, so that difficulties which appeared to be insurmountable in the beginning have been successfully overcome.

Lastly, my deepest gratitude is due to my esteemed friends, Mr. C. E. A. W. Oldham, C.S.I., and Dr. L. D. Barnett, for reading through the proofs of the Explanatory Text and for making many valuable suggestions.

G. YAZDANI

HYDERABAD, DECCAN
1st May, 1930

CONTENTS

Preface v
Introduction xi

EXPLANATORY TEXT

General Remarks 1
Story of the Pigeon: Śibi Jātaka 4
A Palace Scene: a Lady reclining on a Couch . . . 7
A *Bhikshu* at a Palace Door 8
A Palace Scene: continuation of the Previous Story . . 9
A Palace Scene: *not identified* 11
Story of the Serpent: Śaṅkhapāla Jātaka . . . 13
A Palace Scene: Dancing Girls: Mahājanaka Jātaka (?) . . 15
Rājā going out to attend the Sermon of the Hermit: Mahājanaka Jātaka (?) 18
A Palace Scene: Rājā going out on Horse-back: Mahājanaka Jātaka (?) 20
Shipwreck: Mahājanaka Jātaka (?) 22
Lustration and Renunciation: Mahājanaka Jātaka . . 24
Four Heads on a Salver: Story of Amarā-Devī (?) . . 26
Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi 27
Temptation of the Buddha 30
A Bodhisattva 33
The Buddha in Various Attitudes: Miracle of Śrāvastī (?) . 34
Offering of Lotus-flowers to the Bodhisattva (Vajrapāṇi?) . 35
Story of a Serpent King: Cāmpeya Jātaka . . . 38
Fresco in the Right Aisle: *not identified* . . . 43
A Palace Scene: *not identified* 44
A Court Scene: Persian Embassy (?) 46
A Bacchanalian Scene (Khusrau and Shīrīn?) and Decorative *Motifs* 48
A Bull-fight 51
Index 53

INTRODUCTION

WHEN first I was honoured by the invitation to write these introductory words, my impulse was to decline. For I have never seen Ajanta. Great as has been my desire for many years to visit those famous cave-temples, with their frescoes and their sculptures, fortune has denied me the opportunity. How, then, could I be justified in attempting to write an introduction to such an important work as this?

But, though I urged all the reasons that a natural diffidence prompted, Mr. Yazdani persisted in his request. The invitation was expressed in such gracious terms that refusal became impossible. It was true that I had never seen the originals of the paintings here reproduced for the first time in colours by photography: but it was also true that I had given many years of study to Asiatic painting in general; and as these frescoes are not only of supreme interest in themselves, but are of capital importance in their relation to the whole body of Buddhist painting in all the countries of Asia, I have tried on this account to justify my acceptance of the task.

I

The longer one studies the art of the world, the more one prizes, the more one returns to—or so at least is my experience—the art which, whether ostensibly religious or not, expresses or is impregnated with the life of the spirit. A landscape, a group of figures, a painting of flower or tree or animal, may serve for such expression, may move us more deeply than pictures or statues which profess to communicate great ideas. None the less, as we look back over the world's art, are we not longest held and most surely satisfied by those forms which the imagination of a race has assembled to embody the drama of human destiny, the agonies and triumphs of the human soul, and to which the genius of great artists has given embodiment? In such images, such far-descended shapes of myth and symbol, creative design discovers a stimulus and scope far transcending the private reactions of a single mind.

Of such is the art of Ajanta. And I rejoice, as will all lovers of art, that this publication has been made possible by the enlightened munificence of His Exalted Highness the Nizam. For though the previous sets of copies had admirable qualities of their own, they were necessarily translations. After studying the plates of this volume, I see Ajanta with new eyes.

Let us first consider the general effect of the paintings. (I am obliged to write of the impression made by the reproductions; no doubt this impression would be enriched and intensified by sight of the originals.) The interior of the *vihāra* to which the present volume is devoted, as we see it in Plate IV, shows us the disposition of the paintings on the walls and the ceiling, and reveals also the injury of Time and such defacement as has been caused by hands of men. All the lower portions of the frescoes have perished.

One of the latest writers on Indian painting, M. Ivan Stchoukine, though his book[1] is not directly concerned with ancient art, has some illuminating pages on Ajanta. Incidentally, he mentions some words of mine, written many years ago, in order to record his disagreement.

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[1] *La Peinture Indienne à l'époque des Grands Mogols.* Paris, 1929.

Coming from the study of Chinese art, I had once said that the compositions of the Ajanta painters seemed to me 'crowded and incoherent' and their art 'primitive', as compared with Chinese art, in spite of the 'forcible and imposing impression' they create and 'the grace, dignity, and character' of single groups and forms. M. Stchoukine quoted from the first edition of my *Painting in the Far East*, published in 1908: had he turned to the third edition, published in 1923, he would have found that further study of the copies available (actual photographs were not then to be procured) had induced a deeper appreciation, though I imagine he would still disagree with the judgement that 'the composition is often turbid, and we are left with a sense of splendid struggle rather than of serene mastery'.

M. Stchoukine's own view must be quoted, and I venture to translate his words.

> Contemplating the frescoes (he says), one has at first the impression that the numerous figures represented in them are arranged—or piled up rather, so great is their number in proportion to the space—without preparatory thought or any preconceived plan, in a manner so natural that it appears almost accidental. A closer study soon reveals the learned design which controls their grouping. In their anxiety to present a picture full of natural effect, the artists of Ajanta take care to avoid all methods of composing where the governing idea is too obvious, such as those which exhibit the primitive device of a strongly marked symmetry or else immobilize the design by depriving it of movement and life. All their compositions are, on the contrary, based on complex arrangements, where the variety of the attitudes and of the groupings appears inexhaustible. But this abundance of forms is far from producing chaotic design, opposed to all idea of unity; used with art, it helps to create well-planned compositions, the unity of which is not impaired by the fact that it is made up of heterogeneous elements.

I am glad to quote these words of a critic who is certainly not given to vague enthusiasm but, on the contrary, has not only acute perception but closely reasoned judgement. And I am very willing to admit that I may have emphasized too much the 'abundance of forms' without perceiving sufficiently their underlying coherence.

At any rate I freely acknowledge that the more the frescoes are contemplated the more does one appreciate the subtle relationships that connect the groups of figures, so that though the 'unity' of the compositions is not what impresses the eye at first—rather, in many cases at least, the reverse—one comes in the end to recognize that profound conceptions can dispense with the formulas of calculated surface-arrangement and have their own occult means of knitting together forms in apparent diffusion. The unity attained is not so much like the decorative unity we are accustomed to expect in works of pictorial art, as like the deep congruity we find in nature, the continuity of relation between the hills and the trees and the flowers, the shadows and the light: it satisfies in the same large and silent way. For this art is characteristically Indian in its love of natural profusion: it desires the whole fullness of life. And this fullness is not merely the vigorous assertion of human vitality, it is not complete without the life of animals and plants. Man is seen in the midst of nature, not using her as something vanquished and subservient to his needs and pleasures, but emerging among those kindred forms of life as the most eloquent form she has created. The more the mind steeps itself in this art, the more it is aware of the profound conception of the unity of all life which pervades it.

At the present day, obeying a reaction from the kind of art which is engrossed in problems of representation, we lay all the emphasis on design. Design is the root of the matter, assuredly: yet there is a danger in the too conscious pursuit of design. When the whole attention is concentrated on this, there is apt to be loss of depth. The artists of Ajanta had before them always the primary aim of rendering the significance of the stories they were to paint upon the walls. It was rather their intuitive unconscious powers which guided the disposition of the figures and synthesized their grouping. Thus the design is not altogether on the surface, but an underlying vitality within. I would not be thought to make any hard distinction between conscious and subconscious effort. Every artist knows how subtly and inextricably these two co-operate. The painters of Ajanta were conscious artists, obviously; they were not working at random or covering a surface bit by bit without plan or preconception; but they gave easy play, as they went, to the natural animation of forms; they felt no compelling need to enforce cohesion by gestures and attitudes dictated by pictorial effect rather than inspired by the subtle relationships of living beings in company. They welcomed the grace of casual movement. And we note how in these paintings each of the figures is intent on what it is doing or possessed by what it is feeling. There is no turning toward the spectator for sympathy or attention.

A former age, used to the emphasis of decorative unity and really pleased by a rhetorical convergence of gesturing arms and similar devices of composition, had little means of appreciating the looser and more hidden pattern of these frescoes.

It is not merely a question of altered taste. To us, for whom the universe is indefinitely enlarged and deepened to a complexity beyond conception, the art which presents a self-contained and patently reasoned whole, with an imposed logic of construction, seems to reflect an inadequate apprehension of the living world. It represents a conquest, but from the very fact of being a conquest seems to shut out and ignore so much that lies beyond it and eludes it.

II

It is a vision of the living world that the artists of Ajanta present; the teeming earth, the springing plants, the birds, the deer, the elephants; crimson-pillared pavilions and porticoes; gateways and roofs of cities; and among all these the life of men and women and children, supple-limbed, gracious in gesture, freely moving, playful or pensive in mood; all earthly life in its laughter and its grief: but always emerging from it a life of the spirit prevails, the spirit that contemplates and is filled with compassion. Sometimes, as in the fresco reproduced on Plate VI*b*, this spiritual presence appears in the doorway of the house embodied in the *Bhikshu*, who comes like a messenger, and is welcomed by its inmates. But it is in the marvellous fresco reproduced on Plate XXIV that this vision of life attains its consummation.

Here is the spirit of Renunciation: but the life of the spirit appears not as in scornful disgust with the sweet life of earth, opposed and denying; it emerges from that life embodied in the youthful form of a prince of noble birth and breeding, not wasted with asceticism but supple with latent vigour, though gentle in gesture; and he looks not on any single sight but the whole world is in his eyes, and with it an immense, an ineffable compassion. Grandly he emerges, detached yet not isolated from all those variously occupied forms around him; or, if isolated, isolated only in spirit.

Here one may see in perfection the designing instinct of Ajanta's art. The form of the Bodhisattva stands out from the living background yet remains in the warm pervasive atmosphere of the whole scene. There seems to be no deliberation in the disposition of the elements of the design; it is as if all were there by nature; the strong red square as of pillars and cross-pieces, which are said to be a convention for the ridges of hills, contrasts with the just-inclined form of the Bodhisattva, attended by his consort on one side and a vigilant guard on the other, and with the background of mingling curves and jutting angles, where the eye, losing itself at first, discovers by degrees one form and one detail after another; here it is the gleam of flesh where a woman leans among foliage on her lover's shoulder, and a peacock is crying beside his mate, and, more obscure, a monkey plays intently. There, shapes of supernatural beings begin to appear, some floating through the air, others playing music on instruments; the relaxed posture of a woman reclining in her lover's arms takes the eye among more shadowy forms. Human and divine are mingled; it is as if all were rooted in the rich soil of life; and contemplating the fresco one has something like the feeling produced by gazing into an intricate depth of flowering foliage, leaf behind leaf and bough behind bough, when, lingering till the fall of the dusk, one may see the colours of the blooms retire into themselves, yet still burn unequally with a kind of secret glow.

The former copies of the frescoes hardly prepare one at all for the extraordinary beauty both of drawing and of colouring. Texture means so much; and here there is a sensitiveness—consider, for instance, the drawing of the Bodhisattva's lifted hand holding the water-lily—which the most skilful copyist could never hope quite to render.

I am told that the present reproductions do give in the main the truth of the colouring; and one may well believe it. The depth and vibration of colour are extraordinary: and I had never conceived from any of the former copies such moving passages of colour as, for instance in this fresco, the blue of the peafowl, deeply gleaming from sombre green, that foils and enhances the whole warm harmony with its smouldering reds, the red of rust and the red of wine.

Yet, no doubt, one loses much from the reduction of scale. Look at another fresco, and compare Plate XXXI, which gives the whole composition, with the detail given on Plate XXXIII. This marvellous head is that of one of the two women in the lower left-hand corner of the design: but in the larger plate the identity is almost obscured. This example indicates how much we must allow for the reduction. In this head we can appreciate the masterly brushwork of the painter, its largeness, vivacity, and freedom.

There is a kind of drawing which is the opposite of that kind which traces the contours of forms but tells us no more of them than the lines enclosing the coloured areas of a map. The moving brush, defining cheek, arm, or shoulder, persuades us also of the roundness of firm flesh; and more, it communicates not only solidity but the bloom, the quivering tissue of the skin, changing with the emotions that kindle in the blood. Such drawing we find in the art of Ajanta at its best: for even in this one 'cave' the paintings are not all by one hand or quite in the same style.

Certainly the feeling for roundness and relief is strong in some of these artists. There are

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even, what is so unusual in Oriental painting, traces of modelling: and we note that high lights are sometimes rendered on the faces. Such appear on the brow, nose, and chin of the Bodhisattva (Plates XXIV and XXV) and on the face of the woman reproduced on Plate XXXIII. These lights have the appearance of having been sponged out when the painting was wet, after the manner practised by our water-colour painters; but this may be an erroneous impression.

There are no cast shadows in the frescoes: and I believe it is true that in all the pictorial art of Asia cast shadows are never introduced except under the influence and after the example of European painting. But there is in some, if not all, of the frescoes an attempt to produce the illusion of depth and recession, aided by an inconsistent but not unsuccessful perspective in the architecture. See, for instance, the groups in the interiors of the two pavilions (Plate XX) and the detail from one of these scenes reproduced on Plate XXII; a detail in which one can study what is the abiding fascination of Ajanta, the extraordinary beauty of grouped, living, preoccupied forms, here immensely enhanced by the strong, upright lines of the pillars.

III

However tentative, this endeavour to realize or suggest the modelling of forms and the recession of objects in space is remarkable. And the problem is raised: does this endeavour represent something innate in the Indian genius, or is it something stimulated by foreign example? Apparently it dies out of Indian painting in later times. Coomaraswamy notes that at Ellora the remains of the later frescoes are much flatter than the earlier paintings. And this flatness is marked in the Rajput paintings, whether on walls or in miniatures.

On the other hand, we find that in the Mughal school the European effects of atmosphere, relief, and chiaroscuro are readily assimilated. And Dr. Stella Kramrisch observes that in many Indian sculptures the forms seem to be struggling to emerge into the round and stand free from the reliefs to which conditions restricted them.

It is worth noting that a system of modelling in two tones, derived almost certainly from Indian example, is found in certain (by no means all) of the ninth-century Buddhist paintings recovered by Sir Aurel Stein from Tun-huang (see, for instance, Pl. X of *The Thousand Buddhas*). But here, as also in some early Buddhist pictures in Japan, this system is on the way to becoming a decorative convention, no longer really understood. It was an element that Chinese and Japanese painting could not assimilate and ended by rejecting.

There are, of course, writers who believe that the art of Ajanta is somehow derived from Hellenistic art; and this might be an explanation of the tendencies we have been noting. It is not impossible that Hellenistic paintings were known to the Indian artists, but we do not know what they were like. If the wall-paintings of the third century, apparently by an artist from Asia Minor, found at Miran in Central Asia by Sir Aurel Stein, were typical of provincial schools in the Eastern provinces of the late Roman empire, there was little there to inspire or stimulate. The Miran frescoes depict Buddhist scenes. The contours are heavy, the faces have full, prominent eyes like the portraits found in tombs in Egypt. I find no affinity here with the animated drawing or the physical types of Ajanta. But the presence of foreign types, due to the pilgrimage to India of Buddhists from Central Asia, outside the north-western border, in two paintings in this *vihāra* (Plates XXXVIII and XXXIX) indicates a certain amount of intercourse with foreign lands; hence there may have been acquaintance with finer examples of Hellenistic art, capable at least of stimulating.

How this great school of Indian painting grew up we do not know. Probably, like all vigorous schools, it would be willing and eager to borrow from art outside itself what it could readily absorb and assimilate. But in these days we tease ourselves overmuch over the question of origins. The art of Ajanta is thoroughly Indian, whatever stimulus it may have got from without. This is what is really interesting, its special contribution to the art of the world.

And perhaps, after all, the solution of the problem we have been discussing may be simply this, that Indian art, being the art of an Aryan race, has more natural affinity with the art of Europe than with that of China and Japan. I certainly feel that this is true of the paintings of Ajanta.

IV

More than one writer has remarked on the likeness of the Ajanta paintings to early Italian frescoes. I do not think that this is more than a general affinity, which would show at the same time several points of contrast. The empirical perspective common to much Oriental art and the medieval art of Europe, before the 'scientific' perspective of the Renaissance, based on independent study, supplanted it; a somewhat similar, though not identical, technical procedure; the representation of two or more successive episodes of a story in the same composition; the spontaneous invention; the religious inspiration; these are the main points of likeness.

Let me dwell for a moment on a point of difference; the painting of the nude human form. The painting of the nude is very rare in the late medieval painting of Europe most akin to these Indian frescoes. But with the Renaissance it soon becomes the supreme medium of expression for painters as for sculptors. Were it not for the example of Greek scuplture, this cult of the nude form would probably never have arisen. But having discovered the infinite expressiveness of the body in its 'naked glory', the artists of Europe have made it their central study. Yet there has always been something which is inevitably a little artificial in this study, seeing that it has been pursued among people unused to dispense with clothing. It is not something suggested by the sights of everyday life. There is, indeed, something that a detached observer might find at once a little ludicrous and a little pathetic in the labours of the orthodox life class, with its rings of earnest students drawing from a model not occupied in some natural action but posed in an arrest of movement.

To Italian painters of the Quattrocento, to Pollaiuolo and Signorelli, and, following them, the young Michelangelo, the naked body was a discovered romance. Their mental inheritance was totally different from that of the Greeks, for whom the perfect body had the sacredness of service severely devoted by discipline to the State. To them it was, if a symbol at all, a symbol of emancipation from the ascetic fear of, and disgust with, the body which the medieval centuries had implanted in the mind. But above all its beauty was strange and new.

Especially in the nudes of Signorelli we feel this thrill of romantic strangeness in the naked forms of youth.

Now turn to Ajanta. Here is the nude body in every attitude and movement. But the forms have not been studied apart and indoors, each for its own sake, to be fitted deliberately into a preconceived design. These are forms seen in the fields, on the highway, by the river bank; familiar from infancy, stored in the unconscious memory. To the Indian artist the unclothed human body is no rare sight, it is a part of his everyday surroundings. And, no doubt, this is a reason why the drawing of the body at Ajanta has such delightful ease and animation. The beautiful ways of the human body in its spontaneous gestures and poses—and, untrammelled by clothing, they are as beautiful as those of animals—are seized with a sure eye and hand. There is no foreshortening too bold for these artists to attempt, and it is done with a straightforward mastery, as if no hard problem were involved. The forms are lithe and active, but with no muscular development. There is a noticeable gentleness in their movements.

When one recalls the frescoes to memory, it is the extraordinary grace and living quality of particular figures and groups which one remembers with most pleasure: the seated woman seen from behind, for instance (Pl. XI); the groups on Plates XIII, XVII, XXXVII, to name but a few.

We have noted above the sympathetic drawing of animals and birds in the frescoes; a kind of drawing which seems to owe its particular quality not to acute observation from outside but to a deep sense of kinship with non-human life. No doubt the beliefs of Buddhism operated strongly here. According to the *Jātakas*, the Buddha had in previous existences been a deer, an elephant, a goose—who could tell what spirit might not be enclosed in any animal or bird one met?

At the same time the interest, as in Europe, centres in humanity. There is none of that vision which comparatively early in Chinese art sees man set in the immense surroundings of nature, and swept along in the great stream of universal life. The landscape element is tentatively approached, hardly grasped at all. The ridges of hills are marked by what appears more like a sort of structure or scaffolding, sometimes used to divide one scene from another. And there is a very curious convention of representing broken ground as if it were the debris of masonry. Professor Strzygowski has noted that just the same convention occurs in mosaics at Ravenna.

But in plants and flowers the painters show great interest. On the ceiling of Cave I are panels of decoration in which the motives are plants, fruits, flowers, and animals. Examples are given on Plate XXXIX. Plate XL also reproduces two panels of splendid animal painting; a group of deer, and a pair of bulls fighting, which it is interesting to compare with a famous drawing of the same subject by Tōba Sōjō, the great Japanese draughtsman of the twelfth century. Mr. Yazdani notices the beauty and truth of the rendering of foliage of particular trees, the areca-nut palm and the *aśoka* tree, in the Padmapāṇi fresco. And in the panels reproduced on Plate XXXIX we see actual Indian fruits and flowers of great variety combined with birds or human or fanciful animal forms. The fine decorative invention, drawing richly on the various profusion of nature, contrasts with the poverty of Greek art in this respect and makes one think of the inexhaustible floral design of China, to which Europe, from the seventeenth century onwards, is in so deep a debt. Yet the design itself is quite different from Chinese design: the rendering of leaf, flower, and fruit is more solid, the disposition more static. In China the same elements would become less material, a breath of wind would seem to move them, creating tender curves and letting in more air and space. Again, the affinities of Ajanta seem more with Europe than with the Far East.

And yet in the art of Asia what a supreme and central position Ajanta holds! The grand Buddhist art of the T'ang dynasty in China was stimulated and influenced directly from the Indian art of Ajanta and, doubtless, other monuments, now destroyed, and not merely through the formulas of Gandhāra. The stream flows onwards through Corea to Japan. It is a great and fructifying stream, for it gives to the races of the Far East something which otherwise they would have lacked, but which they must unconsciously have desired or they could not have accepted and assimilated it so enthusiastically. The very landscape-painting and flower-painting of China and Japan are tinged and perfumed with Buddhist thought and the Buddhist 'communion of life'. Whoever studies the art of China and Japan, at whatever point he begins, starts on a long road which will lead him ultimately to Ajanta.

V

It is a strange thing that nearly all the great religious art of the world is the work of races to whom this religion was foreign, not native, in its origin. To the painters of Europe, Christ and his apostles are figures whom they must picture with an effort of imagination, beings whose earthly life and natural surroundings were perfectly unknown to them; and, therefore, while clothing these sacred figures in garments of convention, the painters have set them in a background familiar to themselves, among peasants or townsfolk of their own time: the Arno Valley or the foothills of the Alps, the Franconian hills or green pastures of Flanders. It is not different with the Buddhist painters of China and Japan.

The real aspect of Sakyamuni, the Indian landscape, Indian habits of life, are to them also unknown. And in painting the Buddha legend they, like the Italians and the Flemings, have fallen back on what they know themselves, and have painted (as we see in the banners found at Tun-huang) the episodes of the legend in Chinese guise, with Chinese types and Chinese dress. Unlike Christian art, however, Buddhist art of the Mahāyāna tradition gives but a small space to the legend. It concentrates rather on images of contemplation, images which the later developments of Mahāyāna Buddhism created and multiplied but which are foreign to the simplicity of the primitive faith. The greatest works of Buddhist painting in China, the frescoes of Wu Tao-tzŭ and his compeers and followers, have perished. But the masterpieces of Buddhist painting and sculpture in Japan are unsurpassed in the religious art of the world. 'The Descent of Amida with Angels to Welcome the Souls of the Blessed', ascribed to Eshin Sōzu, at Koya-san—to name one among many sublime creations—has the power to carry the spectator into its own atmosphere of inward and abounding radiance and serene movement as of music, though he be totally ignorant of the religious conceptions it embodies. These conceptions, with all their imagery and symbolism, are of Indian origin. It is often assumed that the Buddhist art of the Farther East derives from India only through Gandhāra, where Hellenistic formula was made to serve for the expression of Indian ideas. But though the hybrid art of Gandhāra has left its permanent traces, like a deposit, on the Buddhist art of China and Japan, especially in certain arrangements of drapery; yet it is indisputable, as I have already said, that in the greatest times of Buddhist art in China, when Chinese pilgrims journeyed to all the sacred sites and monuments in India and brought back images and drawings, a fresh contact with Indian art was made and a direct influence established. In the paintings brought back from Tun-huang by Sir Aurel Stein, those so precious documents for the history of Buddhist art in Asia, there are figures which do not recall Gandhāra at all, but which are directly reminiscent of Ajanta; and similar parallels can be adduced from sculpture.

In the Buddhist art of the Far East, then, we have an art based on Indian painting and sculpture, but filtered through the imagination of another race, and transmuted, etherealized in the process.

It is, perhaps, easier for a race to formulate its conceptions of the other world of the spirit by borrowing from outside, from the spiritual experience of a different race; for these already are removed, for it, from actuality and already belong to 'another world' than their own. But India is the home of religions, and we cannot conceive of her as borrowing in this sphere from other peoples.

The images of the Bodhisattvas in the marvellous early Buddhist paintings of Japan are isolated forms, seen as if evoked by the intensity of contemplation from the night of profound brooding in the mind; they appear, glowing with their own inward light, gracious and majestic and alone. But the great Bodhisattva at Ajanta is not, like those later creations of the Farther East, remote and detached from the world; he is in the world, he is a man with consort and companions, with the animation of the woods and the fields, the sun and the shadows and the green earth around him; he is a 'surpassing spirit', yet a man among men and women. For religion here is not something apart, something to which humanity pays homage as to an essence outside itself; it is a conformation of the mind, it is something inhaled with the breath.

LAURENCE BINYON

EXPLANATORY TEXT

GENERAL REMARKS

Plates I–IV

THE beauty and charm of Ajanta are absolutely marvellous; the Buddhist monk could have selected no more appropriate place for his meditations.[1] Precipitous rocks, sometimes bare, sometimes clad with the most luxuriant foliage, guard a vale of surpassing loveliness, on the bosom of which the stream of the Waghora pursues a sinuous course, through bush and bramble interlaced in an impenetrable mass (Plate I). The cliff, where the caves commence, is 250 ft. high, and within sight of the caves is a cascade of seven leaps (*Sāt Kuṇḍ*) forming the source of the Waghora. The air resounds with the sweet notes of birds, great flocks of which, among them parrots and blue pigeons being prominent, are seen flying about. Apes also are abundant, and, although mischievous at times, their nimble movements and wild antics please the eye. The hoot of the motor-car and the rush of visitors have driven away the wild denizens of the valley; but even now, when the crops are ripe, herds of deer are seen grazing in the fields, and the hyena and his comrades, wolf, black bear, and leopard, sometimes also the lordly tiger, resort to their old haunts in search of water and prey.

In the neighbourhood small hamlets still survive, where the *Bhikshu* in olden days went with his alms-bowl to beg food. There also in striking contrast would have been seen rājās and rānīs in rich clothes and jewellery and with all the paraphernalia of royalty, richly caparisoned elephants and horses, and long trains of smartly dressed followers, coming to pay homage to the anchorites of Ajanta. The common platform of religious devotion would enable the humble to sit down with the lordly, the craftsman with the scholar, and the peasant with the statesman; and it is this chequered pattern of human life which in its spiritual aspect is so admirably portrayed on the walls of Ajanta. The charms of natural scenery and animal life made an equally deep impression on the mind of the artist, and inspired him to these exquisite drawings of geese, peacocks, antelopes, bulls, and elephants in varied scenes of marvellous beauty, among woods and groves, lakes and pools. The human vein, running through the birth-stories (*Jātakas*) and the legends of the life of the Buddha, vibrates also in the frescoes of Ajanta, and it is this feeling, that the gods of Ajanta were living human lives, which appeals so much to the imagination of every class of people.

The walls, ceilings, and pillars of nearly all the twenty-nine caves were once adorned with paintings; but the remains are now found in thirteen caves only, the fragments which are of special interest occurring in Caves I, II, IX, X, XVI, and XVII. The material used for these wonderful paintings is remarkably simple—lamp-black, red ochre, yellow ochre, and lapis-lazuli formed the principal colours. The last evidently came from outside the Deccan, but in early days it seems to have been very popular, necklaces of lapis-lazuli beads having been frequently found in the cairns of the Deccan. A layer of clay mixed with rice-husk and gum was first put on the rock, and thereupon a coat of lime, and the surface was smoothed with a trowel. The subject was then outlined in pinkish brown or black, and afterwards colours were filled in by washes and detail accentuated by streaks and dots.

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[1] The caves of Ajanta are situated on the north-western frontier of the Nizam's Dominions, fifty-five miles north of Aurangābād, which is the head-quarters of the division and has a large station on the Nizam's State Railway. Motors are available at this station. For Ajanta a nearer railway station is Jālgaon, on the main line of the G.I.P. Railway. It is in British territory and lies thirty-seven miles south of the caves. For other routes see Map.

It is difficult to speak with any precision as to the beginnings of Indian painting, but in the second century A.D., as represented by some of the frescoes of Cave X at Ajanta,[1] painting was a fairly developed art; it reached its climax in the fifth and sixth centuries, after which decline set in, so that by the eighth century, as represented by some of the frescoes at Ellora, it seems to have lost all its grace and vitality.[2] With the extinction of the Buddhist religion in the seventh century the noble traditions of art seem to have been destroyed; but although painting in its pristine beauty and vigour never revived, the sister art of sculpture, a few centuries later, was stirred into new life. After the sudden downfall from the golden age of the Guptas it is not until the tenth century that Hindu sculpture rises to any artistic significance; and then it assumes a different character, being rather an expression of inner strife than of peace, of violent emotion and exuberance of feeling than of mental calm and spiritual repose.

Cave I, which forms the subject of this part, is considered architecturally to be the finest *vihāra* (monastery) among the rock-hewn temples of India. This praise will not be considered as exaggerated on seeing and rejoicing in the exquisite beauty of the sculpture with which the cave is adorned. The exterior view of the *vihāra* has been somewhat marred by the destruction of the porch which was the prominent feature of it (Plate III). The façade has several bands of carving, among which the scenes from the life of the Buddha, the elephant-fights, and hunting expeditions have been delineated with consummate skill.

The plan of the cave comprises a verandah, great hall, and shrine. The verandah is 64 ft. long, 9 ft. 3 in. wide, and 13 ft. 6 in. high, and it has a cell at each end. A large door in the centre, with beautifully carved jambs and entablature, leads into the great hall, which is 64 ft. square; its ceiling is supported by a colonnade of twenty pillars, leaving aisles of about 9 ft. 6 in. wide all round. At the back of the hall is an antechamber 10 ft. by 9 ft., leading into the shrine, which is 20 ft. square approximately. There are fourteen cells in the interior of the cave, four each in the right, left, and back aisles, and two only in the front aisle, one at each end of it.

The columns of the verandah and the hall are most richly carved, the devices being in some cases fantastic, but always cleverly executed. The shafts have vertical and spiral fluting, encircled by belts of exquisite tracery, and the bases and capitals are ornamented with mythical animals, religious stories, and floral designs in great variety. The girth of the pillars of the hall and the interspacing between them may appear to some a little out of proportion in relation to the height of the ceiling. Again, the ornamentation of the capitals may seem rather overdone; but the fondness of the Indian for ornament is proverbial, and profusion of decoration is not confined to this cave.

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[1] In his *Cave Temples of India* (Plate XXIX), Fergusson has reproduced some figures from the early paintings of this cave. He remarks, 'As far as sculpture can be compared with painting, the costumes found here resemble those of the sculptures at Sanchi of the first century of our era.' But as there is a second-century inscription on the arch of Cave X, the early paintings in it are coeval with this record.

[2] On this point see *Annual Report* of the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad for 1927–8, pp. 20–4.

A good example of the artistic fancy of the sculptors of Ajanta is the delineation of four deer on the capital of a column in this cave (Plate XL *b*). They have been so carved that the one head serves for the body of any of the four. The poses of the bodies are most graceful and absolutely realistic, showing close study of nature combined with high technical skill. The colossal statue of the Buddha in the shrine is, on the other hand, strictly conventional; the artist in the treatment of the body has apparently followed some fixed canons (*Frontispiece*). The expression of the face is, however, marvellous, betokening great internal calm and majesty of feeling. The groups of minor figures around the Buddha and the foliaged sculpture of the doorway form an admirable setting, and show much imagination and ingenuity on the part of the artist.

There is no inscription in this cave to fix its age with precision; but from the details of architecture and sculpture it may be assigned to the end of the fifth century A.D.[1] The style of the painting is analogous to that of the sculpture, and the majority of the frescoes seem to have been executed shortly after the completion of the carving. Some paintings, however, like Plates V and XXXVIII, seem to be of a later period (sixth century), betraying as they do signs of decadence as regards accuracy of drawing.

All the walls and ceiling of the cave were once adorned with painting, but owing to moisture, the depredations of insects and birds, and in rare cases to the vandalism of the art-collector, the frescoes near the floor and the ceiling have been totally destroyed; those which survive are in the middle of the walls or on the ceiling, in serrated patches, as may be seen in Plate IV, which shows the interior of the cave. In describing the frescoes I commence from the wall to the left of the door, following the Buddhist practice of perambulating from left to right.[2]

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[1] The representation of four deer with one common head carved in this cave also occurs at a cave at Ghatotkach, and the general plan of the cave is almost identical with that of the *vihāra* of the latter place. The caves of Ghatotkach bear an inscription belonging to the end of the fifth century A.D. Again, Cave II at Ajanta, which is excavated adjacent to Cave I, and in style seems to be of a later period, bears some inscriptions in an alphabet assignable to the sixth century A.D.

[2] The positions of the frescoes on the wall-surface have been marked out on the Key Plan accompanying the plates.

STORY OF THE PIGEON: ŚIBI JĀTAKA

Plate V

This subject is painted on the wall of the front aisle, between the main doorway and the window to the left of it. The fresco is considerably damaged, and as the colours are not very clear it is reproduced in monochrome.

IT is interesting to note that the delineation of this story at Ajanta tallies with the earlier version of it in the *Mahābhārata*, wherein Indra and Agni assume the forms of hawk and pigeon for the trial of Prince Śibi.[1] In Buddhist literature several stories are related of the charitable disposition of Prince Śibi, his giving away his eyes or the flesh of his body to the 'hawk'; but the full pigeon and hawk anecdote, with balances for weighing an equivalent amount of flesh, is not to be found except in later works, such as the *Sūtrālaṅkāra* or the *Bodhisattvāvadāna-kalpa-latā*, wherein it seems to have been adapted from the *Mahābhārata* version.[2] At Ajanta we notice a pigeon in the lap of a rājā, whom afterwards we see standing by a pair of scales and encircled by a bevy of ladies who are lamenting. The hawk, however, does not appear; evidently he has assumed a human form when demanding justice from Prince Śibi.[3]

The whole story is depicted in three episodes. To commence at the top left-hand corner of the painting, we notice first a *dvārapāla* (doorkeeper) standing between two pillars. His complexion is dark grey and he is wearing a long-sleeved garment, of white and black check pattern, which is tightened round his waist by a broad girdle. The pillars at his back are painted black, showing flutings and ornamentation with precious stones and gold. Two ladies are standing there; one of them is wearing a short skirt of striped silk and elaborate jewellery on her body. Her complexion is silver-grey, and the face indicates that she is occupied in some deep thought; the manner in which she has raised her finger to her lip is very characteristic of Indian ladies. The face of the other lady does not show so much feeling, but her anxiety is apparent by the position of her hand on her breast.

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[1] In the *Mahābhārata*, Vana Parva, the story is narrated something like this: Indra and Agni, to test the fidelity of Prince Śibi to the laws of righteousness, assume the forms of hawk and pigeon. The latter (Agni), pursued by the former (Indra), seeks and receives Prince Śibi's protection. The hawk demands the pigeon as his lawful prey, but the Prince replies, 'He that giveth up an affrighted creature seeking protection, unto its foe, doth not obtain protection when he is in need of it himself. O Hawk, let the people of Śibi's tribe place before thee a bull cooked with rice instead of this pigeon.' The hawk declares that it is not the law of his nature to eat such things. The Prince then says that he will not give up the pigeon, but he will give anything else in his power which the hawk may demand. The hawk replies that he can only accept a quantity of the Prince's own flesh equal in weight to the pigeon's body. Śibi gladly accedes to this substitution. Balances are produced, and the pigeon is placed in one scale. The Prince cuts off a piece of his flesh that appears large enough, but it is insufficient; he cuts again and again, but still the pigeon outweighs his piled-up flesh. Finally, all his flesh gone, the Prince gets into the scale himself. The two gods then resume their divine shape, and announce to Śibi that for the sacrifice he has made he will be glorified in all worlds throughout eternity.

For the full version see *Mahābhārata*, Vana Parva (English translation by P. C. Roy), pp. 596–9 (Calcutta, 1884).

[2] *Jātaka* (Cambridge ed.), iv, pp. 250 ff.; *Avadāna Çataka*, iv. 4 (34) and the note on p. 127 of Feer's translation (Musée Guimet); *Jātaka Mālā*, No. 2, Çibi Jātaka; *Chariyā Piṭaka*, No. 8, Siviraja—C; *Milinda-pañha*, IV. i. 42 (p. 179 of the translation).

[3] In the New Variorum edition of the *Merchant of Venice*, pp. 309–10 (12th impression), the learned editor has quoted the *Mahābhārata* version of the story along with other legends, but regarding their connexion with the *Merchant of Venice* he observes: 'However interesting all these stories and their geographical distribution may be in an archaeological way, surely their connexion with Shakespeare's Shylock and Antonio is the thinnest gossamer.'

To the right of these ladies a rājā is sitting on a low throne, the back of which has a support with square posts decorated with gold-work and jewellery, in which blue stones are prominent. To show that he is the hero of the story, the artist has painted him of greater size than the other figures. The jewellery on his body has been shown with great care and taste. On the head is an elaborate crown of chased gold work with jewels set therein; round the neck there is first a short necklace of large pearls with a blue stone (sapphire) in the middle; and then a large necklace consisting of several strings of pearls; the apparent movement of the latter is highly artistic. He is also wearing elaborate armlets and wristlets set with jewels. The face of the figure has unfortunately been damaged, but the pupil of the left eye, turned as though looking to the side, is extremely interesting. The left hand, twisted unnaturally, shows surprise, as if the rājā has been confronted with some dilemma. In his lap there is a blue and white pigeon, the head and tail of which are intact. The complexion of the rājā is fair, and has been painted a silver-grey tint.

Two small figures, or dwarfs, are sitting at the foot of the throne. One, of dark-brown complexion, is holding a ewer of graceful shape. The high light on the nose of this figure and the treatment of the hair exhibit much artistic skill. The other dwarf, who is of somewhat larger size than the former, is looking up at the rājā in a respectful attitude, with folded hands.

Behind the rājā's throne are two figures. One is a female of greyish complexion, between whose lips a red (carmine) line apparently indicates the colour of the betel (*pān*). To the left of this figure is the head of a servant with grey hair. The face has been obliterated, but the nose and lips are well marked out and show masterly skill in drawing. To the right of the throne we notice a greenish *chaurī*-bearer[1] standing. The manner in which she is holding the handle of the *chaurī* shows much artistic delicacy, particularly the treatment of the fingers.

Proceeding towards the right, there is a pavilion in which a prince and princess (?) are sitting. The prince is wearing a high crown and a string of pearls across his body, like the sacred thread of the Brahmans. The treatment of his ears is conventional. The princess (?) is of greenish complexion, and her features are of a peculiar type, the nose being prominent. She is looking upwards towards the pavilion, in which the rājā is sitting. The prince has the first and second fingers of his right hand erect, probably suggesting some solution to the dilemma with which the rājā has been faced. To an artist, the contrast of the black and blue pillars of this pavilion will appeal. The blue colour has been laid in streaks, the paste used was somewhat coarse, but the effect is most artistic.

Proceeding farther to the right, we enter an open court where the green leaves of a *pīpal* tree against a light vermilion horizon show exquisite taste as regards colour effect. Here the rājā has been represented standing by a pair of scales. One of his hands is open and hanging low, showing in a conventional manner that he is prepared to make a sacrifice. The treatment of this hand up to the wrist is splendid, but the elbow and arm do not show a correct knowledge of anatomy. With the other hand the rājā is holding the strings of one of the scales. Near the cross-bar of the scales stands a red male figure, wearing a long white coat (*aṅgrakhā*), tightened by a girdle, three folds of which near the waist-line may be noticed. In his left hand he holds a long stick, and his right hand is raised in a peculiar manner, perhaps suggesting that the vow must (or must not) be fulfilled. Unfortunately the head is damaged, so that we do not catch the correct expression of the face and cannot decide whether he is the 'hawk' of the story, in a human form, demanding the fulfilment of the vow, or a devoted servant of the rājā imploring him to refrain from such an action.[1] The artist's delicate brush-lines, indicating the creases in the garment of this figure, are very interesting.

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[1] *Chaurī*, a fly-whisk.

At the right hand of the rājā is a group of five women. Three of them, in the upper row, are showing grief at the decision of the rājā. One, with a fair complexion, is beating her breast; another, of greenish complexion, has raised her hand in excitement; the hands of the third, who has a reddish complexion, have been damaged. The remaining two, seated below, are of fair complexion. One of them has a child in her lap, and her face shows anxiety. The other is leaning on her right hand and looking back at her child, who is staring at the mother. The child has been clumsily drawn, nor do the female figures exhibit any artistic skill.

Above the leaves of the *pīpal* tree are shown hills, from the top of which two *yogīs* are watching with interest the drama which is being enacted below. The treatment of their plaited hair is good, and the features of their faces are also not devoid of skill. At the right-hand end of the painting, above the scales, three figures (deities?) may be seen, watching the proceedings from conventional clouds. The figure in the front, who has a greenish complexion, is wearing a crown on his head, a pearl necklace round his neck, and a red jacket with short sleeves on his body. Behind him is a female figure, only the head of which is visible. The knot of her hair merits close scrutiny. Behind her is another male figure of dark-grey complexion, wearing a crown. The faces of this trio indicate no anxiety, but rather exhibit amusement, and bear a strong contrast to the panic-stricken group of women at the right hand of the rājā. The drawing of these three figures is good.

Above this scene we notice two seated figures, one with the first and second fingers of his right hand raised and the other with folded hands, probably representing a Pacceka-Buddha, in the teaching attitude, with his votary. Behind them are two attendants, one male and the other female, both damaged. The red brush-lines showing the joints of the Pacceka-Buddha's toes are artistic.

The third episode of the story has been delineated below the first two. Commencing at the left side, we notice first a male figure wearing a crown and holding a long staff. He has long hair, which is hanging loose on his shoulders. The lower part of the body is damaged. To the right of this figure there is a group of eight *yogīs*. The treatment of the hair of each of them is different. The two at the extreme right have plaits tied in knots over the head;

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[1] According to the *Sūtrālaṅkāra* version (xii. 64) the rājā orders one of his servants to cut off from his body the amount of flesh necessary to satisfy the hawk, but the servant, through affection and respect for his master, refrains from doing that. The figure painted may, therefore, be identified with the servant of this version.

the hair of the third is parted in the middle; the fourth has curls; the fifth has his hair combed back from the forehead; the sixth has his hair sticking to the scalp; while the seventh and eighth have their hair dishevelled. Three of them have red complexions, two are somewhat fair, one is greenish, another silver-grey, and another dark-grey. The heads of these hermits are nicely drawn; but the limbs are not proportionate. For instance, the hand of the *yogī* at the extreme right corner is much too long. The brush-lines showing the patterns of their loin-cloths may interest the artist.

Between the group of the *yogīs* and the figure wearing the crown and holding the staff the traces of a peacock dancing with joy may be seen. The red plumes of the wings and spotted feathers of the tail are clear, but the body has been destroyed. The dance of the bird apparently suggests the joy of the animal world at the successful test of the rājā.

On the right of the group of *yogīs* are a tree (banana?) with long leaves and flowers and the traces of a building,[1] probably a sanctuary. It appears that the *yogīs* are bringing offerings of flowers to the sanctuary as a token of thanksgiving at the resolution and merciful behaviour of the rājā.[2]

The drawing of this subject on the whole may appear crude, but here and there some bits may be found showing excellent modelling, fine brushwork, and exquisite colour-taste. For example, the little dwarf at the foot of the rājā's throne is a perfect gem. Again, the general effect of the picture is not wanting in dramatic qualities: the earnest and resolute attitude of the rājā, the impatient wailings of the ladies of the palace, and the calm but interested mood of the gods show great ingenuity on the part of the artist.

A PALACE SCENE : A LADY RECLINING ON A COUCH

Plates VI*a and* VII*a*

The subject is painted above the window, on the wall of the front aisle, to the left of the main doorway. The fresco is much damaged, but owing to its artistic qualities it has been reproduced both in colour and monochrome.

THE scene represents a lady (princess?) having a bath while reclining on a couch. Her languid mood betrays that she is broken-hearted through grief. She may be identified with the wife of the Buddha at his great 'Renunciation', or with Princess Sīvalī, who felt deeply grieved at Mahājanaka's becoming an ascetic and ultimately herself renounced the world.[3]

The lady is resting on the couch with a pillow under her head and another under her left foot. Her head is inclined towards the right side, but the legs, although folded up, are not inclined in that direction, so there is a contortion in the body near the waist-line. To a European this pose may look inelegant, but the Ajanta artists rejoiced in showing such poses; evidently they aimed at producing by them an impression of suppleness. The treatment of the figure in other respects is excellent; the legs have been purposely drawn thin to show that she has been pining for love. Again, the expression of the face is sad, and the pale brown tint of the body indicates her anaemic condition.

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[1] Above the banana (?) tree the lower part of the body of a female figure may be seen. Near her right arm the hand of another figure may also be traced.

[2] The *Yogī* in the middle (figure damaged) has stretched out his right hand to demonstrate something. In his other hand he holds a vessel, resembling the *lotā* (brass pot) of the present day.

[3] If the latter identification is correct, then the scene delineated on the rock wall refers to this episode of the *Jātaka*: 'When Prince Mahājanaka was wishing to make the queen (Sīvalī) turn back, he saw some *munja* grass near the road, so he cut a stalk of it and said to her, "See, Sīvalī, this stalk cannot be joined again", and he repeated this half-stanza, "Like to a *munja* reed full-grown, live on, O Sīvalī, alone". When she heard him, she said, "I am henceforth to have no intercourse with King Mahājanaka", and being unable to control her grief, she beat her breast with both hands and fell senseless. Her ministers came and sprinkled her body with water and rubbed her hands and feet, and at last she recovered consciousness.' Cowell, *Jataka*, vi. 37.

A fair attendant is pouring water from a pot on her head and another on her legs. Between these two figures there is a third attendant, whose head is destroyed, but the bust, clad in a tight bodice of white material, is intact. This attendant holds a stick in her right hand. A male servant, with a pitcher on his shoulder, is standing at the door of the chamber.

At the right side of the bed a maid with a fly-whisk is sitting and another is looking in an anxious manner at the lady. The figure of the latter maid is destroyed and only the head is intact, but its delineation shows masterly skill. There was a third maid on this side of the bed, whose grey hand removing the pearl-string from the neck of the lady may be traced.

The pose of the maid who is pouring water on the legs of the lady is extremely graceful, although the treatment of the waist and the bust may be considered as somewhat exaggerated, but exaggeration of these parts is a common fault of Indian artists, sculptor, painter, and poet alike.

The striped material of the cushions on the couch of the lady, and the floral design of the cloth of the bodice of the attendant with the fly-whisk, will interest the student of old Indian textiles.

A *BHIKSHU* AT A PALACE DOOR

Plates VI *b*, VII *b*, *and* VIII

The subject is painted on the wall of the front aisle, between the window and small door to the left of the main entrance. It is reproduced both in colour and monochrome, and the figure of the Bhikshu *is also reproduced as a separate plate on a large scale for study in detail.*

THE painting apparently represents a scene in the life of the Buddha, or in one of his previous births, when as a mendicant he goes to the door of a palace, perhaps his own, the human love for his wife attracting him there while he is resolute in renouncing the world. The exact identification of the subject may be uncertain; but it has been delineated with such perfect skill and artistic feeling that the help of a text is not necessary to appreciate its merits. At the threshold we see a *Bhikshu*, divinely calm and serene, with exquisite features and most graceful pose; the head with curled black hair is slightly tilted, and the beautifully moulded right hand raised as if to explain by gestures of the fingers the solution of some mystery. The figure is dressed in a pure white robe; in his left hand he holds a staff, and strings of beads adorn his neck and wrists—the complete accoutrement of a *Bhikshu*.[1]

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[1] The doorway in which the *Bhikshu* is standing is built in the trabeate style and is crowned with a pediment of Dravidian type.

Proceeding farther from the door, we notice a pillared corridor in which a male servant is announcing the arrival of the hermit. The tense expression of his face, and the tips of the fingers of his right hand all joined together, indicate that he is impressed by the demeanour of the *Bhikshu*. This servant is wearing a long coat with full sleeves. The cloth of the coat bears an elaborate design, the patterns being treated in bands. Farther up in the corridor is a maidservant bringing to the hermit offerings or food on a tray. The style in which she has dressed her hair, a knot fixed awry on the side of the head, is interesting.

Passing beyond the corridor, we enter a pavilion, in which a princess is occupied in conversation with a maid of honour. The treatment of the hair of the princess and the maid is extremely effective and shows a highly developed coiffure. The maid is wearing a white full-sleeved jacket, while the bust of the princess appears to be bare, as she is wearing thin raiment. At Ajanta princesses and ladies of position are often delineated wearing almost transparent apparel (gauze),[1] while maidservants and women of middle class have their busts properly covered by costumes and materials of various designs.

Behind the princess there are two more attendants, one of a pinkish complexion and the other of greyish—the coiffure of the latter being interesting. All the women of this picture have circular marks on their foreheads, resembling the *ṭīkā* or *bindī* put there by Hindu women at the present day.[2]

The expression on the face of the princess shows much pathos; and to bring it into further relief the artist has accentuated such of her features as indicate her youth: the fully developed breast, the dangling locks, the short and tight kirtle, and the bewitching jewellery.[3] The colour-scheme of the picture also shows refined taste, the ash-grey[4] complexion of the *Bhikshu* being contrasted with the golden-brown of the princess, and the dark red of the floor placed in juxtaposition to the turquoise blue of the background. The whole composition shows much imagination and artistic feeling, and represents the high-water mark of the Ajanta school.

A PALACE SCENE : CONTINUATION OF THE PREVIOUS STORY

Plate IX

The subject is painted on the wall of the front aisle, above the small door to the left of the main entrance.

THE subject has not been identified with certainty;[5] but it is a continuation of that of the previous painting (Plate VIII *a*), as is apparent from its situation close to the latter and from the resemblance in the styles of toilette and costume to those of the figures of the previous story. To describe the painting: If we commence from the left side, first we see the figure of a grandee or general (?), wearing rich jewellery,[1] and in a state of great excitement, his eyebrows raised, eyes bulging out, teeth exposed, and right hand stretched out with the palm open, indicating that he wants to say something to relieve his feelings in view of the gravity of the situation. The bearing of the general has cast gloom and consternation on the beautiful inmates of the palace: two maids of honour, who are sitting in the corridor where he has appeared, look at one another in deep sadness. Their faces have been partly destroyed, but the features which have remained intact are extremely sweet. The head just below the general's hand is particularly graceful, although the eyes are somewhat conventional; the artists of Ajanta evidently aimed at producing a meditative, dreamy, spiritual effect in their creations, and therefore they have painted the eyes almost half closed. The coiffure also of these two ladies is extremely pretty, and where the hair parts they have decorated their heads with pearl-strings. One of them, who is leaning against the pillar, is wearing a tunic of silk (?); its blue stripes on a white ground are very effective.

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[1] Dacca was noted for its fine muslins, so fine that several yards of the material could be passed through a finger-ring.

[2] The red ochre or saffron religious mark.

[3] Two different kinds of ear-rings are to be noticed in this painting: one of them a large wheel-pattern worn in the lobe, such as is worn by *Yogīs* of the present day; and the other a small gold-wire circlet with pearls strung thereon (*bālī*), worn in the upper part of the ear, and still in fashion in some parts of India.

[4] The hermits (*Sādhus*) of India smear their bodies with ashes, primarily to conceal the beauty of their skin, but also to protect themselves from climatic effects from which their scanty clothing does not guarantee them.

[5] The scene may refer to this episode of the Mahājanaka Jātaka: 'Having made this firm resolution (to become an

To the right of the corridor where the general is standing is a pavilion (a princess's?), where four female attendants are prominent. The most striking of these is the *chaurī*-bearer, standing behind the pillow—in attendance on the princess, whose figure has been destroyed. The drawing of her head shows great skill; the features are also charming, although the figure shows a touch of plumpness; but this artist seems to be fond of stoutish figures, none of his creations being slender. The treatment of the fingers of the *chaurī*-bearer is also extremely artistic; they are drawn with meticulous care as regards their curves. The manner in which she is holding the handle of the *chaurī* and, again, that in which she places the index finger of her left hand below her chin are most charming. Indian women, while talking, often place the forefinger on their lips or chin to express wonder or astonishment. On the little finger of the right hand a sapphire ring is prominent.

Close to the *chaurī*-bearer is a head, the face of which is completely destroyed, but the elaborate coiffure and the conventional lines of the neck may be noticed. At the extreme right corner of the pavilion is another *chaurī*-bearer, whose bust is intact. The expression of her face shows a sweet innocence. Her complexion is fair, silver-grey. She is dressed in a jacket with a floral design, the pattern being apparently in the texture of the cloth. The gold and silver brocades of Paithan,[2] like those of Benares, have been famous from a very early time. Below this *chaurī*-bearer there is another maid of a pale-brown complexion, who is looking at the princess (figure destroyed) with rapt attention. She also has placed her

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ascetic), Mahājanaka entered the city, and standing at the door of the palace, sent for his commander-in-chief and said to him, "O General, from this day forth let none see my face except one servant to bring my food and another to give me water for my mouth and a tooth-brush, and do you take my old chief judges and with their help govern my kingdom: I will henceforth live the life of a Buddhist priest on the top of the palace".' Cowell, op. cit., vi. 29.

[1] He has a pearl-band or tiara on his head, and a collar of pearls and sapphires and a gold chain round his neck. He is also wearing gold bangles (*kaṛās*) and pearl and sapphire armlets (*bāzūbands*). The pearl drops of the latter are artistic.

[2] Baithana of the Greek writers (the ancient *Pratishṭhāna* and modern Paithan) is situated on the left bank of the river Godāvarī, its distance from Ajanta being nearly a hundred miles. It is still noted for its brocades.

forefinger under her chin. The figure of this woman is the plumpest among the group, but still it does not approach the proportions of the creations of Rubens. At the back of this maid there is another, whose head has been partially destroyed. Below the last two figures a head may be noticed, but the fresco being damaged the body of the figure has been effaced. Near this head the chequered pattern of a garment is interesting.

All the ladies in the painting have the religious or decorative circular mark (*ṭīkā*). Again, a deep mauve or black streak between their lips indicates the use of *missī*,[1] with which ladies in India paint their gums and lips as an enhancement of beauty. The artist who has painted this subject is the same who has delineated the previous one, 'A Bhikshu at a Palace Door' (Plate VI *b*).

The story seems to have been continued on the wall farther to the right, although the fresco, being much damaged, has not been reproduced in these Plates. Four figures, however, may be made out; one of them is a woman, sitting on the ground, and her hand is held by another who is standing. There are traces of the figure of a chief (?), behind whom there is a female *chaurī*-bearer.

This scene has been separated from the previous one by a column and wall, in the same way as the corridor in which the general is standing has been separated from the princess's pavilion. In the partition-walls on either side are openings with grill-work of triangular pattern, and brass water-vessels placed in the middle of them may be seen. The design of the grills betokens woodwork.

A PALACE SCENE : *NOT IDENTIFIED*

Plate X *a*

This scene is painted on the left wall of the front aisle. The fresco is much damaged, and as the colour and drawing of some portions are faint, the outline of the middle part only of the fresco has been traced by Mr. Syed Ahmad and is reproduced here. The description given below relates to the delineation of the complete scene on the rock wall.

ON the extreme left of the painting is a dark-green gateway, in which a blurred pale-brown figure may be noticed. Beyond this gate we see a portico, in which a male figure with ugly features is prominent. Below him is a female dwarf, with a long trunk and short legs, carrying a tray of sweets or flowers. Close to these two deformed figures is a young maid of extraordinary elegance and beauty holding a *chaurī*. Her body is poised in a most graceful manner, the curve of the waist-line and the positions of the hands being extremely artistic. It is interesting to note that the painter has aimed at enhancing the artistic effect by introducing contradictory elements in his composition—grouping a most handsome figure side by side with ugly and stunted creatures.

Beyond the portico is the royal chamber, where a *Nāga*[2] king and queen are seated on a throne, and a musical performance with dance is going on in front of them. To indicate that he is a *Nāga* king, the artist has painted a halo of seven cobra hoods over his head, while the queen's head is overshadowed by one hood only. The features of the king are refined, and among his rich jewellery the design of the gold chain, worn between a pearl and sapphire necklace and long strings of large pearls, is very effective. The features of the queen are not so beautiful, but her pose is extremely graceful, the curves and long sweeps of brush-lines intermingling in perfect rhythm., The attitude of the king and queen betrays dalliance, but this, according to the notions of those days, seems to have been permissible in chambers where only private attendants could be present. The delineation of woman in scenes where she appears in public is on the contrary extremely modest; for instance, in the subject, 'Padmapāṇi' (Plate XXIV), the dark princess has turned her face to one side, just as an Indian woman of the present day will do when appearing in public.

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[1] A powder made of yellow myrobalan, gall-nut, blue vitriol, and other ingredients.

[2] *Nāgas* are spirits dwelling in ant-hills, wells, pools, and lakes. They generally appear in the form of a serpent, but sometimes they assume human shape. They are easily moved to anger but worthy of being propitiated, and their general inclination is for the welfare of man, especially in connexion with their power over the element of water.

Behind the queen is a female dancer of pink complexion whose features, in the effort of keeping rhythm, show strain; the eyes are bulging and eyebrows raised. The position of her hands may appear somewhat extraordinary, but Indian dancing-girls often assume such attitudes. Close to this dancer is a female figure of greyish complexion, carrying a pair of small sticks in her right hand and a tray of flowers in her left.

The principal dancer is in the middle, near the feet of the queen. She has raised one hand and one foot and poised herself in a most charming manner. The drawing conveys lightness of movement combined with artistic feeling. She is dressed in a jacket of blue silk (?); the blue colour is extremely fresh. Her bangles and coiffure have also been painted with great care.

Above this dancer is a musician with a reddish complexion, holding a pair of cymbals in her hands. Behind her at some distance is the figure of a male servant who is watching the dance from behind a pillar. The tense expression of his face indicates that he is closely following the steps of the dancers. To the right of the musician holding the cymbals, between the pillars, three more figures may be seen, the most prominent of them being that shown sitting. She is wearing a long robe of blue-striped silk, figures of oxen and ducks appearing in the texture of the blue stripes. The floral design of the cloth of the bodice of the woman who is standing at the right hand of the latter figure is equally interesting. It is a thin brocade, like Benares material. The third figure of this group is a woman with a pale complexion, who while watching the dancer has twisted her finger in a curious way.

The episode seems to have been continued farther to the right, but, the fresco being damaged, only a few figures can be made out. In the middle was a throne, only one foot of which can now be traced. Near the throne is a woman of red complexion who has elaborate ornaments round her wrist. The manner in which she is looking up at the figure on the throne (now destroyed) is extremely sweet. To the left of the throne the remnants of several other figures may be traced. First there is a head, the features of which show great excitement—

In Brahmanical legend and Buddhist lore they are also delineated as anchorites and kings, dwelling in a world styled the *Nāgaloka*, which although contiguous to the human world is invisible. For further particulars see J. Ph. Vogel's *Indian Serpent-Lore* (1926), or Moritz Winternitz's *Der Sarpabali, ein altindischer Schlangencult*, *Mitteil. der anthropol. Gesellschaft in Wien*, vol. xviii (1888).

teeth exposed, eyes bulging, and eyebrows raised. Close to this is another head belonging to a figure with a grey complexion. Above these heads is the figure of a dancing-girl, who has placed her hand on her hip in the approved fashion of the Indian dancing-girls. Her complexion is pale-brown; and although she is wearing elaborate jewellery round her waist and neck, her raiment is of the thinnest material (gauze?), the texture of which has been indicated by fine red brush-lines. Close to the dancer is the figure of an attendant, who is watching the performance from behind a pillar.

The general style of this painting bears a great resemblance to that of the two previous scenes (Plates VI *b* and IX), and it would appear that all three frescoes were painted by the same artist. The religious circular marks (*ṭīkā*) which are the special feature of the female figures of Plates VI *b* and IX appear in this subject also, although they are not to be found in any other fresco at Ajanta.

STORY OF THE SERPENT : ŚAṄKHAPĀLA JĀTAKA

Plate XI

The subject is delineated on the back wall of the left aisle, above the first cell-door. It is reproduced in colour.

THE story agrees with the *Jātaka* [1] and has been depicted in three parts. In the first part, painted in the left top corner, we see the King of Magadha, in an ascetic's robe, imparting instructions in the Law to Śaṅkhapāla, the *Nāga* king. The figure of the ascetic king has been destroyed, but that of Śaṅkhapāla is fairly intact,[2] and he is shown sitting on a low cushion, while another is placed behind his back. He is wearing an elaborate crown and rich jewellery, among which pearls and sapphires are prominent. The expression of his face is one of great devotion and humility, which are further demonstrated by his folded hands. Behind the *Nāga* is a princess of great elegance—although her figure is too much obliterated for the full appreciation of her charm. She is listening with interest to the sermon of the ascetic. The style of wearing the pearl-strings (*hār*) on the sides and back is characteristic and resembles

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[1] The *Jātaka* runs as follows: 'Once upon a time the Bodhisattva was born as the son of a King of Magadha, who ruled in Rajagaha. When the Bodhisattva came of age his father, adopting the religious life, retired to a park and lived as an ascetic. There a chief of the *Nāgas*, Śaṅkhapāla by name, visited the ascetic from time to time and received instructions in Law. The Bodhisattva once visiting his father, saw Śaṅkhapāla with a large retinue, and he was so much struck by the magnificence of the *Nāga* chief that he aspired to be born in the *Nāga* world. At the end of his life the Bodhisattva was reborn as King Śaṅkhapāla, but in course of time he grew sick of the luxury of his life in the *Nāga* world, and by way of penitence he lay on the top of an ant-hill saying, "Let those that want my skin and flesh, let them, I say, take it all." So one day, when Śaṅkhapāla lay there, a party of hunters who had secured nothing on that day passed that way. On noticing the serpent they said to themselves, "To-day we have not caught so much as a young lizard; we will kill and eat this snake-king." Thereafter they wounded Śaṅkhapāla and piercing his nostrils with a sharp stake inserted a cord and dragged him along. At this time a landowner, Alāra, was journeying with five hundred wagons in that direction. He was touched by the hunter's maltreatment of Śaṅkhapāla and he offered to them coins, together with an ox to each, and had Śaṅkhapāla released. The Bodhisattva afterwards returned to the *Nāga* palace and, without any delay, issued forth with a great retinue to welcome Alāra to his abode and conferred on him choice gifts.' Cowell, op. cit., v. 84–91.

[2] There is a halo of the hoods of seven serpents over his head.

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the style of wearing flower-strings (*baddhī*) in India up to the present time. Behind the princess is a maid of red complexion, but her figure has been to a considerable degree destroyed, so that a portion of the bust alone can now be traced.

Below the princess is a dwarf, who is bringing a tray of flowers to the ascetic as an offering. His long trunk, short bandy legs, and wild expression introduce a serio-comic effect into the picture. The artists of Ajanta often bring in such characters to soften the otherwise religious austerity of the subject.

The most notable figure in this group, however, is the woman who is sitting in front of the ascetic. Her pose exhibits great skill and observation. She is squatting, having crossed her legs, and leaning on the left hand, which is placed on the ground, while with the right, which is curved, she is supporting her head in a graceful manner. Although the fresco is somewhat indistinct and partly destroyed, the masterly drawing of the artist in indicating the curves of the body can still be admired. She is wearing a sleeveless, low-necked bodice which looks extremely effective on her graceful form.

The floor is painted dark red and is bedecked with flowers. The design appears at first sight to represent a carpet, but as at Ajanta the foreground of even silvan scenes is represented in this manner, we gather that the device had become conventional.

The second episode of the *Jātaka* is painted to the right of the previous one. A large white snake, the 'Serpent-King' of the story, is being dragged along by a party of six hunters who have put a rope through its nose. The first hunter, while pulling the rope, has his hands stretched forward and his face turned back; the last, who is holding the end of the rope, has bent down so low that he appears to be almost touching the ground. The position of the bodies and the expression of the faces, indicating great effort, are reminiscent of a tug-of-war scene. Behind the company of hunters we see two figures watching the maltreatment of the serpent. One of them seems to have been touched, as is shown by the gestures of his hands. The head of the other figure is broken, and his expression cannot be studied.

Just below the serpent we see a figure with a herd of oxen addressing the hunters appealingly. He is probably Alāra, who offers the hunters coins and oxen, one to each hunter, to induce them to release the serpent. The oxen have been painted in a variety of attitudes, and the artist has availed himself of the opportunity to express his knowledge of animal life. The white ox at the extreme end, although its muzzle is destroyed, has its tail raised and twisted in a peculiar manner, and the curve of the neck indicates that it is trampling the ground in fury. Another, below the white one, which is red, has raised its neck as if bellowing. Two, one red and the other white, are galloping; the treatment of the red one is particularly skilful, showing lively movement. These two have black leather collars and brass bells round their necks. Below the red ox we see the muzzle of a pale-brown one, raised up peculiarly. In front of the two galloping oxen we see Alāra going down a vale, and ultimately we notice him (at the left bottom corner of the picture) with the *Nāga* king, Śaṇkhapāla, who has now assumed human form and is showing his rescuer a lotus-lake, symbolically indicating his palace. The features of Śaṇkhapāla, as a Divine Prince (*Bodhisattva*), are extremely graceful, and show a remarkable contrast to the coarse features of the merchant Alāra.

A PALACE SCENE : DANCING GIRLS : MAHĀJANAKA JĀTAKA (?)

Plates XII *and* XIII

The subject is painted on the back wall of the left aisle, above the door of the second cell. The complete scene has been reproduced in monochrome; but the group of dancing-girls, being in a fair state of preservation, is reproduced in colour also.

TO the right of the Śaṇkhapāla Jātaka the whole of the wall of the left aisle is painted with scenes which are analogous to some episodes of the Mahājanaka Jātaka. To wit, the present subject may be identified with the episode in which Sīvalī, trying to dissuade Mahājanaka from his resolve to renounce the world, invites dancing-girls.[1] We see a rājā sitting with a princess of dazzling beauty in a magnificent pavilion where all the luxuries of life have been arranged to attract him. The jewellery on the rājā's own body is of the richest and choicest pattern, the beautiful crown, the exquisite ear-rings, the lovely pearl-strings,[2] the armlets, the wrist-bands, the bangles, all set with gems of the purest ray and worn in most artistic fashion. The pose, expression, jewellery, and raiment of the queen are absolutely bewitching. She is attired in the thinnest apparel, so that the graceful contour of her elegant form can be seen. The jewellery is almost ingeniously arrayed, bringing into relief the supple limbs. The expression of the face is redolent of love, which feeling is further accentuated by a coquettish pose; her right elbow is resting on the thigh of the rājā, while her left hand touches in a graceful manner his foot. The lower part of her body is stretched below the throne, and the artist has taken delight in this pose to show the long sweeps of his brush-line.

Despite this ensnaring environment, the rājā's face indicates a calm, meditative mood; he is unshaken in his resolve and convinced of the transitoriness of the world—the gestures of his right hand expressing the last idea. At the back of the rājā, outside the pavilion, is a female *chaurī*-bearer, the expression of whose face indicates anxiety. Below the *chaurī*-bearer a lady of rank is sitting on a cushion and watching with deep interest the attitude of the rājā. She may be the mother of Mahājanaka or Sīvalī. The drawing of this figure shows great skill. The check pattern (of black and white squares) of the cloth of the cushion is interesting; it is a silken stuff specially manufactured for cushions.

In the royal pavilion, besides the rājā and the queen, are four figures, two female attendants standing behind the throne and two dwarfs seated in front of it. Of the female attendants, one is of a grey complexion; she holds a *chaurī* and is standing behind the queen. The other maid is of a pinkish complexion, and she is holding a conch-shaped tray of flowers. The expression of her face and the treatment of her fingers show considerable thought and care on the part of the artist.

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[1] The event is narrated in the *Jātaka* as follows: 'The queen Sīvalī sent for seven hundred concubines, and said to them, "It is a long time, four full months, since we last beheld the king (Mahājanaka). We shall see him to-day; do you all adorn yourselves and put forth your graces and blandishments and try to entangle him in the snares of passion." Attended by them all arrayed and adorned, she ascended the palace to see the king, but although she met him coming down, she knew him not, and thinking that it was a Pacceka-Buddha come to instruct the king she made a salutation and stood on one side; and the Bodhisattva came down from the palace.' Cowell, op. cit., vi. 30–1.

[2] The pearl drops of the necklace, worn between the large strings of pearls (*mālā*) and the small necklet (*kaṇṭhī*), showing apparent movement, look extremely artistic.

The figures of the dwarfs are delightful, particularly the one sitting below the queen. His sweet features and long curly hair are absolutely charming. The pose of the body and the treatment of the fingers also exhibit much artistic feeling. His complexion is pinkish, but the palm of his hand has been painted darker (greyish). At Ajanta palms and soles are frequently painted of a darker tint, apparently to indicate the use of henna (*Lawsonia alba*) or some other pigment.[1]

In contrast to the beautiful features of this dwarf, those of the other are somewhat irregular and betray perplexity of mind; his eyes are wide open, teeth exposed, and fingers twisted into a curve. It is interesting to note how the artists of Ajanta observe the greatest care in painting even minor figures, giving each a distinctive character in the general scheme of the fresco.

The floor of the pavilion bears the conventional carpet design, and between the dwarfs an urn-shaped fruit-dish (?) is placed.[2]

In the narrow corridor, in front of the pavilion, four female figures have been delineated. Two of them, standing by the pillars, are engaged in a *tête-à-tête*. One of them is holding the other by her shoulder; the artist is cramped for space, but he masters the situation by adopting this pose. Another, of a pinkish complexion, is standing near the feet of the queen and listening with attention to the conversation between her and the rājā. The pose of the fourth, who is of a greyish complexion, is somewhat unusual: she is crouching in front of the queen, but in order to watch the dance she has turned her head round. The outline of her back has been drawn with consummate skill.

To the right of the royal pavilion we notice another, in front of which the dance is proceeding. The principal dancer is most artistically attired. She is wearing a long jacket with full sleeves; but for freedom of movement its sides have been so cut that the lower ends of the jacket hang absolutely loose. The sleeves and bust are on the contrary close-fitting and look very *chic*. The colour-contrast of the jacket is also happy—the sleeves are of dark-red brocade, while the middle part is apparently of white silk. Her skirt (*ghagrī* or *peshwāz*) is quite long, and the striped design of the cloth is very pleasing.[3]

The ornaments of this dancer have also been painted with care, and among their large variety the *ārsī* (thumb-ring set with a miniature mirror), the *karanphūl* (ear-rings with elaborate design) and *sarāsarī* (ornament of the head, comprising gold or pearl strings) should not be overlooked. The coiffure also exhibits much imagination, and the intertwining of the flowers with the plaits is most pleasing. The pose of the dancer is typical; one familiar with Indian steps of to-day could say that very little change has taken place in this art since the fresco was painted, almost fifteen hundred years ago.

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[1] Indian ladies to this day paint their palms and soles with henna and other pigments to enhance their beauty.

[2] Dishes of this form are frequently to be found in the paintings of Ajanta.

[3] The Indian *ghagrī* (or *ghaghrī*) of the present day is an elaborately pleated skirt reaching down to the ankles. At Ajanta the *ghagrī* is generally short and has no pleats or ruffles; perhaps the idea of ruffles or pleats had not developed at that time. The cloth is generally a striped material similar to the silk of Burma of the present day.

At the right hand of the chief dancer there are two more of a coppery complexion, playing on flutes. The orchestra comprises five artistes; two of them are playing cymbals, one a pair of drums (*ḍhol*), another a *mirdang* (a double drum with a narrow ring in the middle) and the fifth apparently a guitar, for a gourd-like thing is visible in her lap. The complexion of one of the two musicians playing cymbals is pallid, and the chief attraction of this figure is the black trimming of the collar of her *cholī* (half-sleeved bodice). The complexion of the other artiste playing cymbals is pinkish brown, while that of the drum-player is brick red. The waist-strip of this woman is like the modern *brassière* of Europe, and it is, perhaps, the earlier form of the Indian *cholī* and *aṅgiyā*.[1]

The features of the woman who is playing on the *mirdang* are coarse, and show deep lines, evidently indicative of old age. At the back of the orchestra a lady of dark-brown complexion is standing. Her pose is extremely graceful, but her face betrays sadness. Near the flute-player are two dwarfs. The face of one has been damaged; the other is looking up with interest at the dancing girls.

Below the royal pavilion we notice a shed supported on four wooden posts (Plate XII). The roof of this shed is of small rectangular wooden planks which resemble brickwork in the painting. In this shed a woman is pounding spices. Her features are exquisite. The curry-stone and the pose of the woman remind one of the Indian habits of to-day. By the side of the curry-stone there are four utensils: a brass pot, a drum-like earthen vessel (or basket?), an urn-shaped vessel similar to that in the royal pavilion above, and a circular dish (*chaṅger*) with a ring at the bottom. At the other end of the curry-stone there is another woman, who holds a conch in her left hand and whose right hand is raised to her ear, as if to catch the words of some one who is speaking to her. The gesture is natural, but the hand is clumsily drawn. At the back of this woman is another who holds a rectangular frame. The scene represents very well the domestic life of early India.

The style of architecture, as shown in this painting, seems to be that of wooden buildings; although in several caves at Ellora and Ajanta stone pillars and brackets of this type are to be found, they, again, are based on wooden models. The decoration of the building with pearl tassels seems to be a favourite *motif*, and, apart from the frescoes, it is frequently to be found in the carving of the pillars. Pearls must have been quite abundant in those days, for the artistic fancy does not readily work on imaginary themes.

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[1] The *cholī* is a tight bodice with half-sleeves; the back is covered and strings are tied in front. The *aṅgiyā* is so shaped in front as to support the breasts, but on the back it is open and has only strings for adjustment.

RĀJĀ GOING OUT TO ATTEND THE SERMON OF THE HERMIT: MAHĀJANAKA JĀTAKA (?)

Plates XIV *and* XV

The scene is painted on the wall of the left aisle, between the doors of the second and third cells. It is reproduced in colour, and for purposes of detail two half plates (XV a and XV b) are given in monochrome.

THE subject is a continuation of the previous one, and may be identified with the visit of Mahājanaka to Northern Himavat, where the ascetics Nārada and Migājina appeared, one after the other, to confirm the king in his great resolve.[1] The *Jātaka* version, however, varies from the story as painted on the rock-wall, for here we do not see the ascetic (Nārada or Migājina) delivering the sermon from the air; instead, he is shown in a park with beautiful trees and flowers, perhaps the deer-park of Benares, as may be surmised from the figures of two antelopes to be seen just below the seat of the hermit. Although the subject is extremely religious—the 'Renunciation'—yet the artist has painted it with extraordinary skill and imagination—the magnificent elephant-ride of the rājā, the beautiful dresses, jewellery, and features of the congregation, and the charm of the natural scenery, all combining to stir deep human interest in the profound spirituality of the theme.

The story is delineated in two parts. Behind the musicians, described in the last section (pp. 15–17), we see a gateway out of which a rājā, riding on a grand elephant, is coming. The figure and trappings of the elephant have been painted with the utmost care; even the small bells hanging below the saddle are not forgotten, while the limbs of the animal show life and movement. The figure of the rājā also is ingeniously drawn; with all the equipment of royalty, the canopy, the crown and the rich jewellery, he looks extremely serene, and absorbed in deep thought, as indicated by the gesture of his hand.[2] In front of the royal elephant is a large retinue, among whom is prominent the figure of an attendant of red complexion, who is holding upright an unsheathed sword with an incurved blade.[1] He is apparently the bodyguard of the young prince,[2] who is riding on a bay horse,[3] and is overshadowed by a canopy. The horse is prancing so that a passer-by has been seized with fright. The figure of this terror-stricken pedestrian may be noticed to the right of the prince. To the prince's left there is another bodyguard, and beyond him the heads of two more attendants may be seen, with their hair treated fancifully. The hair of one has been shown in clusters of matted locks, while that of the other has been dressed and knotted at the crown in the fashion of the *yogīs*. The attendant with the matted locks is armed with a shield, the hide of which has a check pattern.

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[1] The *Jātaka* version is as follows: 'At that time (when Mahājanaka made the resolve to renounce) an ascetic, named Nārada, dwelt in the Golden Cave in Himavat, who possessed the five supernatural faculties. After passing seven days in an ecstasy, he had risen from his trance and was shouting triumphantly, "Oh, the bliss, Oh, the bliss!" and while gazing with his divine eye to see if there was any one in India who was seeking for this bliss, he beheld Mahājanaka the potential Buddha. He thought, "The king has made the great renunciation, but he cannot turn the people back who follow, headed by the queen Sīvalī,—they may put a hindrance in his way, and I will give him an exhortation to confirm his purpose still more;" so by his divine power he stood in the air in front of the king and thus spoke, to strengthen his resolve:

"Wherefore is all this noise and din, as of a village holiday?
Why is this crowd assembled here? Will the ascetic kindly say?

. . . . .

Think not thou hast already crossed, while with this body still beset;
There are still many foes in front,—thou hast not won thy victory yet.

. . . . .

High thoughts of self, low thoughts of self;—not this, nor that befits the sage;
Be virtue, knowledge and the law the guardians of thy pilgrimage."

Nārada then returned through the sky to his own abode. After he was gone, another ascetic, named Migājina, who had just arisen from an ascetic trance, beheld the Great Being and resolved to utter an exhortation to him that he might send the multitude away, so he appeared above him in the air and thus spoke:

"Horses and elephants, and they who in city or in country dwell,—
Thou hast left them all, O Janaka: an earthen bowl contents thee well." '

Cowell, op. cit., vi. 32–3.

[2] The palms of the rājā, being painted of a darker tint, show the use of henna (*supra*, p. 16).

We notice another shield-bearer in front of the prince's horse, the check design of his shield being clearer. Shields of rhinoceros skin have been long in vogue in India, but the pattern here seems to have been painted upon the skin and is not indicative of scales. This shield-bearer is wearing a scarf or a shawl, the top corners of which are tied above his chest. Above him there are two figures, the nearer, who is looking up, being a female (?) dressed in a coat of brocade. The other figure has been obliterated. There are some more figures, three below the shield-bearer, and two, of dark complexion, near the elephant and the swordsman. But as the fresco is damaged the features of these figures are effaced.

The second part of the story, representing the rājā's visit to Himavat, is painted on the upper half of the fresco. On the right side, the elephant of the rājā and the horse of the prince are to be seen. The latter is held by two dark-skinned grooms. A dark-skinned *mahāwat* is in charge of the elephant, and is still seated on the neck of the animal, while a *charkaṭa* is perched on its hind-quarters. A tiger's hide shows the vacant seat previously occupied by the rājā.

To the left of these animals is the royal entourage. The rājā himself, in a pose of profound respect, with folded hands, is listening to the sermon of the hermit. The latter is clad in a striped loin-cloth (*dhotī*), and a belt of black leather (with patterns embossed or painted on it) passes round his waist and legs by way of support. The Hindu *Sannyāsī* and the Moslem *Darwesh* often use such girdles for support when crouching long in meditation. The hands of the hermit are painted in the *teaching* attitude, but the treatment of the fingers and the manner in which the rosary is held are conventional.

The heads of antelopes below the hermit's seat are, as suggested above, conventional, referring to the sermon of the Buddha in the deer-park of Benares.[4]

Below the rājā we notice a boy of grey complexion, who is kneeling before the hermit; his left hand is placed on the ground and with the right he is saluting. The treatment of his hair is conventional, but most pleasing. He is probably the son of the rājā. Behind this boy is a young woman listening to the sermon with rapt attention. She is wearing a double jacket of brocade, the upper part of which, dark red in colour, has half-sleeves and is open in front, while the lower one, of green hue, has full sleeves and is closed in front. Behind this lady there is a servant, whose face is turned towards the grooms; its expression and the gesture of the man's hand indicate that he is saying something to them.

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[1] It is like the short Nepalese sword, known as *kukṛī*.

[2] If the identification of the subject with the Mahājanaka Jātaka is correct, then the prince here is Dīghāvu, the son of Mahājanaka.

[3] The trappings of the horse are interesting. The saddle is of the *chārjāma* type with short stirrups. The reins are double and the head-harness is elaborate. There are leather straps round the throat and across the forehead, and embroidered bands round the nose and across the muzzle. The leather bands at their joints are decorated with embroidered rosettes and a large tassel hangs below the lower jaw of the animal.

[4] These features make the identification of the subject with the visit of Mahājanaka to Nārada a little doubtful.

At the right hand of the rājā is a grey figure, the treatment of whose fingers shows that the esoteric sermon of the hermit is being followed with attention; and two figures to the left of the rājā, one of fair complexion and the other a dark brunette, give the same impression. Above the rājā are four figures; one of them is dressed in a white robe; another is a dwarf, carrying flowers on a tray of banana or palm leaf, the treatment of his fingers being extremely artistic; the third figure is draped in a long coat of brocade, or silk, with floral designs woven in the texture; his head is treated with great skill, the long hair, the drooping moustache, and the melancholy expression of his face producing a life-like effect. The fourth figure of this group is that of a guard, clad in a spotted coat and leaning on a staff.

Behind the hermit are three figures: one of another hermit, which is somewhat obliterated, and the other two of a prince and princess, whose features are very elegant. Although the number of figures in this painting is very large, the arrangement is most appropriate and no effect of unnecessary crowding is felt at all. The colour-scheme also shows good taste, for example, the delineation of lilies with their tender dark-green stalks and snow-white flowers is absolutely charming.

A PALACE SCENE : RĀJĀ GOING OUT ON HORSE-BACK : MAHĀJANAKA JĀTAKA (?)

Plates XVI–XVIII

This subject is painted on the back wall of the left aisle, between the doors of the third and fourth cells. The entire fresco is reproduced in monochrome only, but the conference of the rājā with the queen is printed in colour, and for the study of detail the retinue of the rājā is reproduced on a larger scale as a separate plate.

THIS episode is apparently connected with the events delineated before, for we notice that the rājā is engaged in a serious conversation with his consort, expatiating perhaps upon the merits of *renunciation*, after having heard the sermon of the hermit. The subject, although differing in environment from the version of the *Jātaka*, fits in with its main theme, for Mahājanaka, after the exhortation of Migājina, counsels Sīvalī thus:

'I've left behind my subjects all, friends, kinsmen, home, and native land;
But th' nobles of Videha race, Dīghāvu trained to bear command—
Fear not, O Queen of Mithilā, they will be near to uphold thy hand.

And again,

If thou would'st teach my son to rule, sinning in thought and word and deed,
An evil ending will be thine—this is the destiny decreed;
A beggar's portion, gained as alms, so say the wise, is all our need.[1]

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[1] Cowell, op. cit., vi. 34.

The artist of Ajanta has depicted the theme beautifully. After the sermon of the hermit the scene lies in the interior of a palace. Commencing from the left side of the fresco we see a pavilion in which an elderly lady, probably the mother of the rājā, is initiating the young rānī into the secrets of the doctrine (*renunciation*). The former has clasped the folded hands of the rānī in order to console her. The expression of the queen-mother betrays sadness, apparently in consideration of the youth of the rānī. The dress of both these ladies is interesting; the queen-mother is wearing a robe of white muslin,[1] while the rānī is clad in a bodice of transparent gauze, the fine texture of which has been delineated by white dots and lines. Behind the queen mother is a *chaurī*-bearer (female) wearing a low-necked garment (frock?) of striped silk. The treatment of her hair is very beautiful. Below the figure of the queen-mother there is another maid, who is looking up in an excited mood; she is wearing a bodice of dark-grey brocade.

In front of the pavilion of the queen-mother is the apartment of the rājā, in which he is shown deeply occupied in a religious discourse with his wife. The conventional treatment of his fingers indicates that he is explaining some intricate problem. The attitude of the rājā expresses earnestness mixed with tender feeling, and in drawing his portrait the artist has shown much poetic sense. The face of the queen has been spoiled by the peeling of a piece of the fresco, but her pose is quite graceful and shows that she is listening with attention to the counsel of the rājā. The transparent cloth of her bodice can be discerned with greater certainty here, for the white dots and lines showing the texture of the gauze are clear. Behind the rājā is a *chaurī*-bearer of fair complexion, the sad expression of whose face is very striking.

Behind the rānī also is a *chaurī*-bearer, the colour of whose skin, silver-grey, is charming. She is wearing a blue bodice. Her features are beautiful and resemble to some extent those of the 'Mother' in the 'Mother and Child' group in Cave XVII. The drawing of her right arm and the beautiful fingers show exquisite taste.

Behind the cushion of the rānī another female figure is to be seen. The expression of her face shows astonishment; perhaps she does not understand the esoteric teaching of the rājā. The way in which she is clinging to the cushion is very effective. There are two more female attendants behind the rānī, who look rather puzzled about the future life. One of them is holding a bunch of lotus-flowers in her right hand; but the prospect of life seems so dismal that in her melancholy mood she is about to drop them.

A dwarf is sitting below the rājā's throne, looking up at him.

The palms of the rājā and rānī, as well as of several maids of honour, are painted with henna and the lips are stained either by *pān* (betel leaf) juice or by *missī*. The hair has been dressed in various fashions, and in some cases is bedecked with flowers and jewels.

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[1] The style of the garment indicates that it is not a *sārī*. In Bengal until quite recently the *only* dress of woman was a single sheet (of about 5 or 6 yds. in length), a part of which was tied round the loins and another part worn over the head and bust. In Rājputāna, on the contrary, the *orhnī* (covering for the head), the *aṅgiyā* (short tight bodice) and the *lahaṅgā* or *ghagrī* (skirt) have been in fashion for a long time. It would appear that the dress of the early inhabitants of India was of the simplest character, like that of the Bengal peasants of to-day, and that the dresses which we see at Ajanta were adopted when foreigners (*Yavanas* and *Śakas*) settled down in considerable numbers in the country.

PROVINCIAL LUCKNOW

In the second part of the story the rājā is represented as coming out of his palace riding on a white palfrey, the head and neck of the horse being drawn with realistic effect. The expression of the rājā's face and the gesture of his right hand show that, although riding, he is deeply absorbed in some religious thought. The prince is riding on a bay horse, and between him and the rājā there is another prominent figure draped in a blue coat with tight sleeves. He has made a loop with the fingers of his right hand and he is looking up. In front of the rājā's horse is a *chaurī*-bearer wearing a long coat [1] of white silk, into which figures of ducks have been woven.

Behind the *chaurī*-bearer there are three figures; one at the extreme right corner, with a beard, has a very peculiar expression. The upturned eyebrows and wild looks indicate some danger or calamity looming over the rājā.

Alongside the rājā's horse, in the lower part of the painting, we first notice a flute-player, then a drummer, and a little higher up a conch-blower, whose cheeks are puffed and eyes bulging out in the exercise of his calling. Above the figure of the conch-blower is another musician, who is playing on cymbals. Below him and to the right of the conch-blower is perhaps the royal herald, the quickness of whose movement may be judged by his stretched-out hand. This is perhaps the earliest known delineation of the hand expressing rapidity of action. In later Hindu sculpture and bronzes such a position of the hand is quite common, becoming almost conventional.[2]

The lower part of the fresco is damaged, but we see a pavilion of the *rath* (chariot) model, and near it the head of the rājā can be traced among several obliterated figures. He is apparently bidding adieu to the denizens of the palace. A little farther to the right we see him again with some male attendants: here he is perhaps saying good-bye to the servants of the court. In the extreme right corner we see the rānī walking alone under a canopy. This scene probably represents the stage when Mahājanaka had left Sīvalī.

The colour-scheme and the grouping of figures in this fresco show a highly refined taste, and for these qualities it may be compared with some of the best Italian work of the Renaissance period.

SHIPWRECK : MAHĀJANAKA JĀTAKA (?)

Plate XIX

This subject is delineated on the back wall of the left aisle, above the door of the fourth cell. The fresco is considerably damaged and therefore reproduced in monochrome only.

THE identification of this subject is somewhat uncertain, for occurring on the rock-wall immediately after the *renunciation* of Mahājanaka, it might seem unlikely that it alludes to the mishap of the prince in the sea voyage which he undertook in earlier days to acquire wealth in order to regain his father's kingdom.[3] But as the 'Lustration' and 'Renunciation' scenes of this *Jātaka* (Plates XX–XXII)[1] are also not shown in proper sequence we may account for the anomaly by supposing that the painting of the *Jātaka* was begun on the rock-wall without any preconceived scheme as to the order of events, and the different episodes were from time to time delineated according to the fancy of the artist or the demand of the votaries of the shrine.

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[1] This seems to be different from the Indian *aṅgrakhā*, which has an opening and laces on the breast.

[2] Compare South Indian bronzes and sculptures representing the 'Dance of Siva'.

[3] The *Jātaka* version runs thus: 'Before Mahājanaka was sixteen years old he had learned the three *vedas* and all the sciences; and by the time he was sixteen he had become very handsome in person. Then he thought to himself,

The subject, as painted on the rock-wall, may be described thus. We see a chief (merchant-prince?) sailing in a boat with several attendants. The gesture of his hands, which is rather conventional, denotes that he is faced with some dilemma. Behind the attendant to the left of the chief is an obliterated figure, overshadowed by a canopy (*chhatar*). This figure seems to have been attired in a robe and may represent Mahājanaka in a plain costume, before his acquiring the kingdom of his father, the canopy above him being emblematic of his divine personality. The boat appears to be of considerable size, and a pavilion, similar to those shown in the palace scenes,[2] is erected in the middle of it. The hull is massively constructed and in its side four courses of planking are visible above the water. The bow and stern have carvings of animal heads at their ends, the eyes of the animals being prominent. A large fish (shark?) is attacking the boat near the stern; and a sailor has climbed up the ladder placed against the mast (?), and he is steering the boat with a long pole or oar from there. Another sailor is at the helm, but as the fresco is damaged in this part, his action is not quite clear.

To the right of this scene, the sinking of the boat has been painted. The stern only is visible, the rest of the boat being submerged nose downwards. A man is being attacked by fishes and a sea-monster. He has raised both his hands in alarm. Another person is shown being carried off by an alligator or shark, while to get free of its jaws he is trying to open its mouth. The wild stare and firmly closed lips of this man show that he is struggling with death itself. One sea-monster resembles a beaver, while another, which is painted white, has the head and ears of a cat.

The end of the story is not clear, for the fresco is damaged. At the extreme right end we see two figures, but their heads being destroyed their action cannot be determined. The drawing of the fishes is very poor, and, except for the interest of the *Jātaka* and the representation of a fifth-century boat, the fresco does not possess any artistic merit.

Below the shipwreck another subject was depicted, representing some *Nāga* story; but the fresco is almost completely destroyed, and only a few heads can be traced.

"I will seize the kingdom that belonged to my father," so he asked his mother; "Have you any money in hand. . . . I will take only half of it and I will go to Suvaṇṇabhūmi and get great riches there and will seize the kingdom." He made her bring him the half, and having got together his stock-in-trade he put it on board a ship with some merchants bound for Suvaṇṇabhūmi and bade his mother farewell. . . . In seven days the ship made seven hundred leagues, but having gone too violently in its course it could not hold out; its planks gave way, the water rose higher and higher, the ship began to sink in the middle of the ocean while the crew wept and lamented. . . . When the vessel sank the mast stood upright. The crowd on board became food for fishes and tortoises and the water all round assumed the colour of blood. . . . . Now at that time the daughter of the gods named Maṇimekhalā had been appointed guardian of the sea by the four guardians of the world. As she saw the Great Being she thought to herself, "If Prince Mahājanaka had perished in the sea, I should [not] have kept my entry into the divine assembly!" She rescuing Mahājanaka brought him to Mithilā, where his father ruled.' Cowell, op. cit., vi. 24–5.

[1] *Infra*, pp. 24–6.

[2] Plates XIII and XVI.

LUSTRATION AND RENUNCIATION : MAHĀJANAKA JĀTAKA

Plates XX–XXII

The scenes are painted on the wall of the back aisle, between the doors of the first and second cells to the left of the ante-chamber. They are reproduced both in colour and monochrome, and for purposes of detail a portion of the fresco is reproduced as a separate plate on a large scale.

THE subject of *renunciation*, being the main doctrine of the Buddhist religion, is frequently alluded to in the *Jātaka*, but as several scenes of the Mahājanaka story are delineated in this cave it appears likely that the 'Lustration' and 'Renunciation' painted here also refer to this story. Commencing with the 'Lustration', we see a grey figure (the rājā elect) squatting on a throne, the feet of which show a design still to be noticed at Delhi and in the Panjāb in the feet of bedsteads and small stools (*piṛhīs*). The back support of the throne shows chased gold work set with jewels, while figures of two goats are carved, one on each side, in an erect position.[1] Two servants are pouring water from fluted metal pitchers over the head of the rājā.[2] The heads of the servants are covered with scarves, the ends of which, falling into graceful folds, may be seen on their backs. The expression of the rājā is somewhat gloomy and the loop which he has made with the fingers of his left hand conventionally indicates that his mind is already perplexed by the temptations besetting a prince's life.

On the left hand of the rājā are three female attendants, one of whom holds a *chaurī* and the other two are bringing the royal dress and ornaments (?) on trays. The features of these attendants are exquisitely drawn and the high light on the eyes and chin of the middle one, who is of a reddish complexion, is extremely artistic.

To the left of the rājā's pavilion there is another, at the extreme left end of which a servant is carrying a water-pitcher. He is wearing a short *dhotī*, but the upper part of his body is uncovered and the sacred thread (*janeo*) across his breast is clear.[3] Next to him is the figure of a servant who is leaning on a staff. He is clad in a white tight jacket and short *dhotī*. Beyond him are two women, one stooping down to take the tray from the head of a dwarf, who seems to be crushed under his burden while climbing up the steps of the pavilion. The figure of the dwarf has been drawn with great care and it produces a comic effect in the picture. The woman, who is stooping, seems to be nude, but in fact she is dressed in a *sārī* which has become transparent on account of being wet; the folds of its train can be seen at her back. Behind her there is another female attendant who is holding a tray; her complexion is dark, yet the features are very pleasing. Beyond this maid there is implied another figure who is holding a *chaurī*; the *chaurī* is visible, but the body of the attendant is concealed by pillars.

Outside the pavilion, to the left, are beggars who are asking for *dān* (alms) on the occasion.

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[1] Below the figure of the goat at the right hand of the rājā the figure of a child may also be seen.

[2] Copper pitchers of this design are still sold in the bazaars of India.

[3] Such features show that Buddhists by this time (end of fifth century) had readopted many of the religious customs of the old Brahmanical faith. There is a figure of an eight-armed fat dwarf carved above a pillar in the hall of this cave, which is again suggestive of the influence of the latter faith.

The lowest figure is clad in a *dhotī* with red stripes, and round his waist he carries a begging bowl and a brass ewer.[1] His right hand is stretched out to receive alms, while in his left hand he holds an umbrella. The next beggar has a beard, and the hair of his head hangs loose. The third also has a beard, but his hair has been tied in a knot on the crown of his head. The top figure has a round face and is wearing a cap. At the back of the beggars two areca-nut palms may be seen, and in the background are some banana trees, only the leaves of which are visible, their trunks being concealed by the matting (*chaṭā'ī*) partition set up between the royal apartments and the garden behind. The architecture of the apartments is interesting; the entire fabric seems to be of wood, set up on pillars which are graceful in form and beautifully gilt and painted.[2] The pillars at their base are fixed to a frame of wood which rests on rampant tigers and hyena heads, evidently carved of the same material.[3] The design is fantastic, but at Ellora, in the carving of the great Kailāsa, a similar design has been followed and the entire building rests on the backs of elephants, tigers, and fabulous animals.

In the corridor to the left of the rājā's apartment a rolled-up curtain of grass and leaves may be noticed below the lintel, along the capitals of the back columns. The presence of this curtain, coupled with the matting referred to above, shows that, although for royal use wooden halls were constructed, the dwellings of the people in general were plain and made of grass and similar perishable material, just as huts in the present-day villages of India are made.

Although the subject represents an occasion of great jubilation—the ceremonial washing of a prince before his assuming the royal charge, the wearing of state robes and jewels, and the giving of alms—yet through Buddhist teaching it is pervaded by a spirit of indifference to worldly pomp and glory, and as a result we see that in the second scene, the 'Renunciation', the prince has donned the robe of an ascetic. He does not seem to have left the palace yet, for the apartments are the same[4]; but his belongings are very simple: a begging bowl is in his hand, while a few vessels, evidently earthen, are placed in the wooden frame above his head.[5] The shapes of these vessels are interesting; one of them is an egg-shaped jar with a small neck and flattened mouth. The lid, which is separate, is like an inverted champagne-cup.[6] The other two vessels, which are placed one above the other, have round bodies, narrow necks, and flattened mouths, resembling the brass water-pots of the Madras Presidency of the present time.

In the corridor, in front of the hermit's pavilion, there are four women and two children. One woman is kneeling while making an offering to the hermit. Another, of a fair complexion, holds a bowl, wherein she has brought either food or flowers for the hermit. The remaining two are of a dark-red complexion, and one of them, who is behind the kneeling woman, has folded her hands as a mark of devotion.[1] The high light on her nose and chin is very artistic. The features and posing of these women are extremely graceful, and the artist has perfectly succeeded in relieving the seriousness of the subject by these delightful figures. Of the two children, one is between the woman with the red complexion and the one who is kneeling, and the other child is below the latter woman.

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[1] Brass ewers of this shape are still found in Bengal.

[2] In the Mahā-ummagga Jātaka the master-carpenter is requisitioned by the Great Being to build a hall. Cowell, op. cit., vi. 158.

[3] The head of a hyena seems to be a favourite decorative *motif* at this time, for we notice bands of hyena heads on the façade and main entrance of this cave.

[4] According to the *Jātaka*, Prince Mahājanaka stayed at his palace for four months after he had embraced the ascetic life. Cowell, op. cit., vi. 30.

[5] 'Mahājanaka secretly instructed his attendant to have some yellow robes and an earthen vessel brought to him from the market.' Cowell, op. cit., vi. 30.

[6] Vessels of this kind have been found in great abundance in the cairns of the Deccan.

The colour-scheme of the subject is quite effective, the bright red and blue of the pillars enlivening the pale green of the background and the dull brown and grey of the human figures. On the blue capitals the effect of shade has been shown by dots, which is very pleasing.[2]

To the left of the hermit's apartment the subject is continued up to the extreme end of the wall, but the fresco being much damaged is not reproduced in the Plates. Near the end of the wall a pavilion may be seen in which four figures can be made out. The heads of three of them are intact, and the lowest, representing a man with a white skull-cap, drooping moustache, and eyes looking sideways, is very comical.

To the right of this pavilion there is another in which a rājā is sitting on a throne. His pose shows a feeling of homeliness, for one of his legs is stretched on the ground while the other is bent and placed across it. There are also three women in this apartment; one of them sitting near the feet of the rājā, and two standing behind her. The features of all three are most beautiful, showing freedom and play of fancy, in contrast to the figure of the hermit in the 'Renunciation' or that of the prince in the 'Lustration', where the artist seems to have been fettered by religious conventionalities.

The design and colouring of this subject are different from those of the other frescoes of this cave, and it seems to have been painted by a different artist.

FOUR HEADS ON A SALVER : STORY OF AMARĀ-DEVĪ(?)

Plate XXIII*a*

This subject is painted below the 'Lustration' scene, and although it is included in the colour plate XX, yet for purposes of detail it is also reproduced separately in monochrome.

THE fresco is much damaged, hence the identification of the subject with the story of Amarā-Devī in the Mahā-ummagga Jātaka made by some iconologists must be accepted with some reserve.[3] In the subject as painted, we see a white structure on the top of which knobs set with finials suggest wooden architecture. To the right of this building there are some apartments, either a continuation of the former or separate from it, in which a plump figure holds a salver with four human heads. A young hermit (Mahosadha?) holding a rosary in his right hand looks at the heads with an expression of deep sympathy. Opposite the hermit, on the other side of the salver, is a prince who is touching very gently the forehead of one of them. Behind the prince is a lady holding a rectangular frame in her right hand and a ribbon in her left.[1] The features of the prince and the lady have been most beautifully drawn, and the fresco seems to have been executed by the artist who painted the scenes from the Mahājanaka Jātaka on the wall of the left aisle (Plates XIV–XVIII).

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[1] On the forehead of this woman are whitish streaks similar to the sectarian marks used by Hindus.

[2] The dots are clearer in the monochrome plate (XXI *a*).

[3] A story of the four pretended wise men, Senaka, Pukkusa, Kāvinda, and Devinda, and the one real wise man, Mahosadha (the Great Being). Numerous problems are presented, which the four fail to solve, but the Great Being succeeds in unravelling them. They therefore make several attempts to destroy the Great Being, but each time he sets at naught their plans and comes out triumphant. For complete version, see Cowell, op. cit., vi. 156–246.

Below the salver there is another figure, a portion of whose head is preserved. The outline of another head may be traced at the back of the hermit, but, on account of its being outside the pavilion, it perhaps belongs to the figure of the hermit himself in another episode of the story. The treatment of the hair in both these heads is identical, and hence this conjecture.

BODHISATTVA PADMAPĀṆI

Plates XXIV–XXVII

The subject is painted on the back wall of the inner aisle, to the left of the antechamber, and it is reproduced in colour in two plates, one of them representing the whole of the fresco and the other the bust of the principal figure, Padmapāṇi. For purposes of detail two plates are given in monochrome also, showing the Bodhisattva and some other figures.

THIS fresco is unanimously considered to be the *chef-d'œuvre* of Indian art. The principal figure, Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi,[2] is delineated as of colossal size,[3] and its graceful pose, refined expression, and beautiful colouring at once capture the gaze. The artist has represented in this figure all the qualities which youth, high birth, noble character, and religious temperament can combine. The body, although not an ideal specimen of physical culture, yet has strong masculine limbs, a broad chest, round arms, and a well-set neck. The facial features are most elegant: a high intellectual forehead, large meditative eyes, aquiline nose, and firm lips; the raised eyebrows and the high light on the nose and the chin give an air of spirituality to the countenance. The complexion is equally refined, a pearl-grey with warm brown flush, perhaps indicative of the glow of youth. Long black hair in the hermit fashion falls uncoiled on the shoulders, while there is placed upon the head a high crown set with choicest sapphires, emblematic of royal birth. The jewellery is not profuse but is select in type; the pearl and sapphire necklet contains the finest gems, and the design of the longer strings of pearls and the style of wearing them across the chest and

[1] The rectangular frame may be a weaving-frame.

[2] The term Bodhisattva in the beginning was applied to every member of the *Saṅgha* or Holy Order; but later (the period of the Gandhāra sculptures) it was restricted to those only who possessed extraordinary virtues. Among this distinguished class, five (according to some, six) were considered to be divine and affiliated to *Dhyānī* Buddhas and their respective *śaktis*. Padmapāṇi, 'the lotus-handed', is one of the divine Bodhisattvas, and he is affiliated to the *Dhyānī* Buddha Amitabha and the *śakti* Pāṇḍarā. According to Buddhist scriptures Padmapāṇi has been performing the duty of a Buddha since the disappearance of Gautama, and he will continue to do so till Maitreya, who is now in the Tuṣita heaven, descends to earth.

[3] The fresco being damaged, the legs of the figure from a little above the knee are missing. The measurements of the figure in its present condition are as follows:

Height of figure: from crown to a little below the knee, 5 ft. 9½ in.

Breadth: from shoulder to shoulder (across the chest), 2 ft. 5½ in.

Waist: across, 1 ft.

Arm: across, 6 in.

Face: Forehead to chin, 1 ft.; jaw to jaw, 9 in.

round the arm are highly artistic. The scanty dress perhaps suggests an ascetic life, but figures of rājās have generally been painted at Ajanta without any upper garment. The clothing round the loins in this subject is apparently a *dhotī* of striped silk worn in an artistic style.

The pose with a swing at the waist-line, although somewhat conventional, is yet quite pleasing, producing a lively idea of movement in the figure.[1] In the right hand the Bodhisattva is holding a blue lotus, suggestive of his title Padmapāṇi and also emblematic of purity of character.[2] The fingers of the left hand seem to be contorted in a conventional style; but as the fresco is there damaged it is difficult to criticize them properly.

The light and shade have been carefully marked,[3] and a life-like effect has been produced by the accentuation of the dark-brown outline.

Apart from the merits of the principal figure, the composition of the subject as regards delineation of minor characters and beauty of environment exhibits a high intellectuality and great artistic fancy. For example, the dark princess,[4] to the left of the Bodhisattva, painted almost life-size,[5] is by itself a *tour de force*. The artist has painted her as swarthy simply for love of contrast to the pearl-grey complexion of the Bodhisattva, but the treatment of the limbs is exquisite, showing much feminine charm. The serenity of her face amply atones for her scanty clothing, which comprises only a bodice of fine gauze,[6] and a short skirt of striped silk. The irregular lines of the upper part of the latter garment show the caprice of the artist's imagination. To brighten up the otherwise dark complexion he has thrown a high light on the nose and lips and placed pearl ornaments around the body. The ribbons hanging from her right shoulder are also artistic. Her general expression, however, exhibits restraint and modesty combined with an air of meditativeness, which, by means of special delineation of the eyes, is a general feature of all the figures at Ajanta.

She also is holding a lotus in her hand, apparently to indicate that she is the consort of the Bodhisattva. The artist has attempted to indicate the grace of a matron instead of that of a young damsel, and her pose in being slightly turned from the Bodhisattva, to whom the public gaze naturally will be directed, is very characteristic of the habit of Indian women when appearing in public with their husbands or relatives.

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[1] The pose originally seems to have been adopted from the dancing attitude.

[2] It may be interesting to note that in the Mughal pictures of India a favourite pose for a king or queen is with a flower in the hand.

[3] The tint of the neck below the right jaw is darker, and again the left side of the face is browner than the part of the face shown in the light.

[4] At Ajanta there seems to have been no colour distinction; fair rājās and dark queens, and vice versa, have been painted frequently without any idea of derogation. The general colour of the skin is, however, dark brown, which is fairly representative of the Indian complexion. To this general colour, sometimes a golden hue, or a pinkish effect has been given, apparently to show the state of health or the mood. There are also figures of brick-red and dark-green (livid) complexions, the former generally representing farmers, workmen, and people of lower classes, who on account of their profession are exposed to the sun, and the latter used either figuratively for people living in woods, or for those who have lived morally a wild life, and whose faces have actually turned green.

[5] The legs of this figure are also missing. Its measurements in its present condition are as follows:

Height: from crown to a little above the knee, 4 ft. $5\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Breadth: across the shoulders, 1 ft. $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

Waist: across, 9 in.

Below the waist line: across, 1 ft. $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

Face: length, 9 in.; breadth, 6 in.

[6] It is difficult to trace the gauze of the bodice in the reproduction, but on the original fresco it can be discerned in fine brush lines.

Behind the Bodhisattva and the black princess is a female *chaurī*-bearer of rather unusual features. Her long blue coat and peculiar head-gear, with four upturned embroidered flaps and a conical top in the middle, suggest that she is a foreigner,[1] perhaps one of the Scythians who had embraced Buddhism in considerable numbers at this time and settled in the Deccan.[2]

At the right side of the Bodhisattva is a dark mace-bearer who has raised his finger, perhaps to indicate that he is in watchful attention to the commands of his lord. The figure is burly and the features rough, appropriate for a guard. He is wearing a long white coat, apparently his uniform when on duty. Between the Bodhisattva and the dark mace-bearer there are two other figures, one male and the other female, both of a dark complexion. Their features, however, are obliterated, as the fresco is much damaged at this place. To bring the figure of the Bodhisattva into prominence these two figures have been painted short, their heads reaching only to his waist.

The background of the picture also shows much vivacity. Upon conventional hills, which are suggested by red bands,[3] we see monkeys frolicking about, and higher up a pair of peacocks crying with joy. The male bird has raised up its neck, the beak being open, while the female is listening to the note of its mate in an amorous attitude.

To the right of the peacocks is a grove, whence a human pair are watching the Bodhisattva. The female is leaning on her partner in a loving manner, with her left hand placed on his shoulder and with the right caressing his arm. The features of these two are obliterated, but they seem to be in a joyful mood.

On the left side of the fresco at the top we notice two *gandharvas* (flying figures), one male and the other female. The upper parts of their bodies are missing, but the lower are intact and show them floating in the air. The male *gandharva* holds in his right hand a sword erect, while in the left was perhaps a trumpet, but this is not clear now. The female figure has clasped the shoulder of her mate and, supported thereby, is drifting in the air. Below the *gandharvas* are two *kinnaras* (heavenly musicians) with human busts and birds' legs and claws. The long dark lines of *surma* (eye-powder) are very prominent in the corners of their eyes. One of them is playing on a harp, the form of which will interest the student of the early musical instruments of India. Lower down, a little above the shoulder of the Bodhisattva, is a pair of dwarfs (cherubs?) who are moving their hands and legs about to convey their sense of extreme joy at the sight of the Bodhisattva.

Below the *gandharvas* there is also a happy couple, a fair rājā and a dark queen, sitting in an amorous attitude and watching the Bodhisattva from their hill retreat. The pose of the queen is extremely graceful and shows much artistic feeling. The belts of hills continue at the back of this happy couple, and higher up we see some monkeys and also a lion.

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[1] According to some scholars, the Vākāṭaka kings, under whose auspices some of the monasteries of Ajanta were excavated, had foreign blood in them. Further, we find inscriptions at Nāsik and Kārli mentioning the names of certain *Yavanas*. A *Śaka* satrapy was also established in the country now called the Central Provinces.

[2] Caps of this kind are still in vogue in Turkistan.

[3] Hills at Ajanta have often been suggested by such bands, which in some cases have also been used as partitions to separate one subject from another.

The restraint and austerity expressed in the figure of the Bodhisattva and that of his royal consort are delightfully balanced by the mirth and glee of the animal world and the heavenly beings; and the rhythm of this spiritual theme obtains additional grace by a tasteful contrast of colours, the pale greens of the foliage merging into the scarlet of the belts of hills and the fresh blues of the birds' feathers, and the drapery and jewellery enlivening the dull flesh-tints.

Apart from the marvellous effect of the picture as a whole, the student will find delight in many a pretty detail; for example, the delineation of the areca-nut palm and the *aśoka* tree leaves is extremely artistic. Again, the placing of black dots on the green background behind the crown of the Bodhisattva has added to the perspective effect.

The name and history of the artist who painted this wonderful subject will never be known, but the fading fresco, as long as it survives, will tell the story of the genius and skill of its author in most eloquent terms.

TEMPTATION OF THE BUDDHA

Plates XXVIII *and* XXIX

This subject is painted on the left wall of the antechamber. It is reproduced both in colour and monochrome. The fresco is, however, much damaged, large layers of it, at both top and bottom, having peeled off.

IT is a legend in which Māra, the lord of the world of passions, comes to Gautama (Buddha) while he is practising austerities, and tempts him to abandon his striving. The story is not to be found in the Pāli Canon[1]; but in later commentaries and works it is narrated with much play of fancy, and it is also referred to in the *Jātaka*.[2] At Ajanta the legend is sculptured in Cave XXVI, but it is delineated with far greater vivacity in this fresco.

To describe the subject: if we commence at the top left corner we notice a witch with crooked nose and protruding eye-balls. The cast of her other features is equally hideous and her breasts are loose and hanging low. She holds a poniard with a curved blue blade[3] in her right hand, while she has stretched out the left at full length, with a finger raised warningly towards the Buddha.

In front of the witch is a green monster, with the head of a ram, holding a staff or sword in his right hand and another weapon in his left. Beyond him was another ogre, only the leg of whom can now be traced, and farther on another giant with the head and fin of a seal.[4]

Commencing again at the left side, we see below the figure of the witch a stalwart warrior holding a sword in his right hand. He has turned his face aside in anger, which is further expressed by his contorted features, the drawing of these being very realistic. Below this warrior are two figures; one of them is of a monster with a boar's head and human body, who is armed with a mace which has a circular top. The other figure represents a dwarf with a round face, bulging eye-balls, and very wide mouth; the expression of his face is one of anger combined with despair. Farther to the right is a prominent figure of dark-brown complexion; he is probably the general of Māra's army. The harsh lines of his face, the tight lips, and stretched-out hand show great wrath. He is holding a long blue sword in his right hand, and the knot of his scarf is like the bow-knot of the Europeans of the present day.

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[1] Thomas's *Life of Buddha*, pp. 71 ff.

[2] In the Pañchaguru Jātaka (No. 132) the following lines, recited by the Master, are quoted:

'In all their dazzling beauty on they came,
—Craving and Hate and Lust. Like cotton-down
Before the wind, the Master made them fly.'

Farther down we read, 'After he had recited the *sutta* right through to the end, the brethren met together in the Hall of Truth and spoke of how the daughters of Māra drew near in all their myriad charms yet failed to seduce the All-Enlightened One. For he did not so much as open his eyes to look upon them, so marvellous was he!' Cowell, op. cit., i. 288.

[3] The blue colour conventionally represents steel.

[4] These figures are not clear in the reproduction (Plate XXVIII), but can be traced in the original fresco.

A little above, to the left of the general's figure, is a red monster with a large head and small body. He is glaring fiercely and opening his mouth with his little fingers in order to frighten the Buddha. The figure, grotesque in design, produces a serio-comic effect in the picture. A white owl is perched on the head of this monster: in India the owl is considered to be the harbinger of bad luck.

Coming down, and starting again from the left, we notice a green figure, the features of which indicate a life spent in vile pursuits. He is raising a blue sword; but his face shows despair. Close to him is another figure, balancing a short spear with both hands in order to hurl it at the Buddha. The drawing of this figure, although somewhat obliterated, exhibits great vigour. At its left hand is another figure the features of which are dumpy and distorted, their ugliness being accentuated by the high light on the lip and nose. This figure also holds a spear.

Below the green monster are two figures of an ash-grey complexion, but their outline is obliterated to a considerable degree. To their right is a bowman, which figure again is indistinct. Farther to the right is a bearded shield-bearer, the features and expression of his face showing great imagination and study of human life.

Around the figure of the Buddha, which will be described later, is a bevy of seven young damsels, five in front of his seat and one on each side of it. The exquisite features, graceful posing, and sweet expression of their faces remind one of the feeling of Raphael's school in the delineation of female figures. At the right hand of the Buddha is a dark-grey nymph, who, with the light of love in her eyes, looks appealingly at the Great Being. Her left hand is gracefully placed on his throne, while with the right, curved in a conventional manner, she is communicating something. The conception and skill of the artist in depicting this exquisite figure, which is so life-like in expression and so artistic in design, are absolutely amazing.

The damsel on the left side of the throne is also painted with great care and thought, but in the delineation of her features the sense of proportion is not so refined as in the previous figure. The eyes seem to be much too large, so perhaps the nose, but the drawing of the fingers and nails is exquisite, showing great elegance of form and suggesting that care for their beauty which characterized the women of that time. With her left hand she, in a conventional manner, is suggesting something to the Buddha, but the expression of her face is rather sad, apparently at the failure of her mission.

The figures in front of the Buddha's seat are much damaged, so that their expressions cannot be studied with certainty. One of them at the extreme left end, below the right hand of the Buddha, holds a white pot, containing apparently some intoxicating juice. She may represent the Indian goddess (spirit) of wine. The pair just in front of the seat are casting ogling glances:

they are in a close embrace, and the waist of one is exposed to the hips. The attitude of the pair to the right of these is similar; one of them is apparently demonstrating the charm of her firm breast by holding it in one of her hands, while a finger of the other hand is placed coquettishly on her chin. These seven enchantresses are apparently the daughters of Māra, deputed by him to ensnare the Buddha by their charms.

At the right side of the fresco there is an army of monsters, more horrible than those delineated on the left. At the top was an ogre, of a pinkish-brown complexion, whose form and expression, owing to the fresco peeling off, cannot be discerned now. Below him is another of a whitish complexion, whose figure is intact, and in him the artist has painted perhaps the ugliest monster of the troop. He has no nose, and the upper lip is cut in a triangular form, thus exposing the teeth. A blue viper is coming out of his mouth, while the hair of his head is erect and the expression of his eye is most uncanny. Next to him is a dwarf showing much resentment. He holds a spiked weapon in his left hand, and with his right is communicating something to the Buddha. To the right of the dwarf is another monster, with the muzzle of a boar. He holds a blue sword in his right hand.

Below the white monster the artist has painted a comic figure with a large head and short limbs. His shaggy eyebrows, large rolling eyeballs, dumpy nose, and ugly mouth are repulsive to a degree, but his action, in exposing his teeth by stretching wide his mouth with his tiny little fingers in order to frighten the Buddha, has imparted considerable humour to the subject. To the right of this figure is a warrior in an excited mood, flourishing a club or mace. The knot of his scarf is worthy of notice.

Coming farther down, we notice a green patch, marking the position of another monster, the figure of which is now obliterated. To the right of the green patch is perhaps Māra himself, standing in a state of extreme despair. His hands are placed on waist and hip, and his face is turned to one side to show his humiliation and dejection of spirits. Two children, one on each side, are looking at his face in a mock-surprise fashion.

Below the figure of Māra the fresco is destroyed, but farther down it is in places intact, and four figures may be traced, two of them being of a dark-grey complexion, and two fair. Their faces and posing indicate either resentment or despair.

The figure of the Buddha, which is painted in the middle, is conventional. He is sitting cross-legged in a meditative mood, with the right hand lowered down over the knee and the palm exposed, and the left hand placed in his lap in the *bhūsparśamudrā* (earth-touching attitude). He is dressed in a hermit's habit,[1] but the right arm and half of the chest are exposed. The features of the face, on account of the damage to the fresco, are somewhat indistinct, but the eyes are closed, the lobes of the ear elongated in the conventional style, and the hair curly and tied in a knob on the crown, above which is either a gold ornament or the conventional effulgence radiating from the hair.

The treatment of the entire figure clearly indicates that the artist has had some prescribed formula to follow, to violate which would have been a sin. The artist's fancy and sense of humour, on the other hand, are amply demonstrated in the delineation of the army of Māra, a motley crowd varying from most beautiful damsels to the funniest imps and most abominable sprites. The face of each of these figures is marked with character, and their delineation reflects deep observation and close study of human nature. The general effect of the fresco is, however, somewhat grotesque, and like many a picture of its class in other countries it will appeal to religious-minded people only.

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[1] A sheet, for it does not appear to be a robe.

A BODHISATTVA

Plate XXX

The subject is painted on the back wall of the antechamber, to the right of the door of the shrine. The fresco is much damaged, and is therefore reproduced in monochrome only.

THE artist has depicted a colossal figure of the Bodhisattva (Avalokiteśvara?) on each side of the door of the shrine as *dvārapālas*. These figures are much damaged, but the portions of them which are intact show great poetic feeling. Of the figure on the right-hand side of the door, portions of the head, right shoulder, bust, and left arm are preserved, the last being in the best condition. The modelling of the elbow and the fingers, with their delightful curves and deep-set nails, is absolutely charming, but the type of beauty is more luscious than vigorous. The round, supple elbow, the delicate, sensitive fingers, the exquisite jewellery, and the delightful lotus-flower, so delicately held, all convey a sense of femininity rather than an impression of robust manhood.

The head of the figure is much damaged, but the face is more or less intact, being round and wearing a meditative expression, the effect of which is counterbalanced by the luxuriant coils of black hair spread over the shoulders, the princely crown, the rich jewellery, and other ornamental features.

The delineation of the minor figures in this subject exhibits a fine sense of composition. In the top left-hand corner we notice a happy couple watching the Bodhisattva from the hills.[1] The fresco lower down on this side is completely destroyed. At the right-hand corner of the fresco there is another happy pair sitting in a joyful mood.[2] Below them, on the hills, are a Bhīl and his wife, the former looking with rapt attention at the Bodhisattva. The features of the Bhīl are characteristic, and in his left hand he holds a bow and a sheaf of arrows. The woman is looking towards her husband as if to communicate something, while a basket of mat-work (?) hangs below her wrist.

Coming farther down we see a pair of doves cooing with joy at the sight of the Bodhisattva. They have stretched their necks to express their feelings. Lower down is a lady who is offering flowers to the Bodhisattva. The delineation of the tips of her fingers and nails is again extremely artistic. At the right hand of the lady, near the feet of the Bodhisattva, is the head of another woman. The expression of her eyes and the wide open mouth clearly indicate that the glory of the Divine Being has amazed her.

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[1] The delineation of the hills is conventional. The happy couple are not fully reproduced in Plate XXX *a*.

[2] This pair have not been reproduced in Plate XXX *a*.

The subject is more or less repeated on the left side of the door of the shrine,[1] excepting the figure of the Bodhisattva, which is different, the face being rather plump and the complexion golden-brown instead of the silver-grey of the former picture. The repetition apparently indicates that the artist had to paint the subject according to some prescribed scheme, without any choice on his part.

The painter of these two Bodhisattvas and the 'Temptation of the Buddha', as shown by the style and technique of these subjects, appears to be the same artist, whose extreme love of elegance and delicacy of feeling in the treatment of female figures may be highly admired, but his art in the delineation of male figures, such as that of the 'Bodhisattva with the Beautiful Hand', is freakish and smacks of the verse of many an Indian poet in its effect of over-sweetness. His genius and skill must have won the highest approbation at the time, for the painting of the antechamber would not have been entrusted to an artist of ordinary merit.

BUDDHA IN VARIOUS ATTITUDES: MIRACLE OF ŚRĀVASTĪ(?)

Plate XXIII *b*

This subject covers the whole of the right wall of the antechamber; but as the fresco has decayed in several places only a portion of it is reproduced here in monochrome.

THE artist has painted the figure of the Buddha in accordance with the religious canons, in different attitudes (*mudrās*).[2] The Great Being is dressed in robes of various colours, grey and green, and his right shoulder is in some figures covered and in some exposed. The treatment of the hair, the lobes of the ear, and the hands is conventional; the expressions of the face are stereotyped, while the bend given to the necks of some figures is rather inartistic. He is delineated both standing and seated, his head encircled by a halo, and cherubs are bringing offerings. The figures of the latter are delightful, but the really charming feature of the subject is the design of the lotus-stalks which entwine the Divine representations. The fancy and skill of the artist in depicting the different varieties of the lotus-flower in successive stages of bloom, with all the beauty of its delicate stems, are absolutely marvellous. In the enchantment of such an environment one can visualize the dream of the pious Buddhist, of a vision of the Master in a thousand forms in a heavenly orchard of lotuses of the purest colour and loveliest form.

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[1] The grouping of the figures in this fresco is as follows: At the top left-hand corner are a male and female figure sitting in an amorous pose. Below them is another pair, standing on the hills; the woman has clasped the shoulder of her husband. Farther down are a pair of doves, cooing with joy, as on the right side of the door of the shrine. Below them is a lady who is bringing a tray of large lotus-flowers to offer them to the Bodhisattva. Farther down the head of another woman may be traced; she is looking up. In the extreme right-hand corner of the top is another pair; the head of the male figure is very handsome, while the pose of his partner indicates shyness.

[2] The principal attitudes are (1) the *Dharmacakra* or Teaching, in which with the fingers of the right hand the tips of some of the fingers of the left hand are held. In the Viśvakarma cave at Ellora the figure of the Buddha is repeatedly carved in this attitude. He is holding the tip of the little finger of his left hand with those of his right, giving a chance to the uninitiated public to make the amusing remark that the god has cut his little finger and is holding it to relieve the pain. (2) *Dhyāna* or Meditative, in which both the hands are placed in the lap, one above the other, with the palms open. (3) *Abhaya* or Assurance, in which the right hand is raised with the elbow curved and palm exposed, and the left placed in the lap. And (4) *Bhūsparśa* or Earth-touching, in which the right hand hangs low with the palm exposed and the left is placed in the lap.

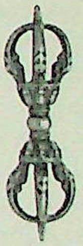
The subject has been aptly identified by some scholars with the Great Miracle of Śrāvastī, in which the Master, to outwit the six wise heretics of Rājagriha, rose into the air and caused flames of fire and streams of water to issue forth alternately from his body. Afterwards, he appeared before the assembly seated in the attitude of *meditation* on a colossal lotus-flower, and made to spring from his body a multitude of Buddha figures in a variety of poses, sitting, standing, lying down, and walking.[1]

OFFERING OF LOTUS-FLOWERS TO THE BODHISATTVA (VAJRAPĀṆI?)

Plates XXXI–XXXIII

This subject is painted on the back wall of the inner aisle, to the right of the antechamber, and is reproduced in three colour plates, one of them representing the whole of the fresco and the other two the busts of the Bodhisattva and of a black princess.

THE identification of the principal figure of this subject with Vajrapāṇi,[2] as made by some scholars, is not very convincing, for the symbol held in his right hand is more like a half-blossomed lotus-flower with a delicate stalk projecting to the right of his thumb[3] than the end of a *vajra*, the symbol for a thunderbolt. The identification is apparently based on the analogy of some of the Buddhist caves at Ellora,[4] where figures of the Bodhisattvas Padmapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi are carved in the antechamber of *dvārapālas*, but the symbolic lotus-flower and *vajra* are each absolutely distinct there and do not leave room for doubt as in the present case. The figure may with greater certainty be identified with that of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara,[5] for we notice the representation of a seated deity, who may be Amitābha, in the crown of the Bodhisattva. Avalokiteśvara has frequently been sculptured as a *dvārapāla* in Buddhist shrines,[6] the image of Amitābha being the salient feature for his identification. He is the most esteemed Bodhisattva of the Mahāyāna pantheon, being styled Saṅgharatna, or the Jewel of the Order.


VAJRA

Though the identification of the subject may be uncertain from an iconographic point of view, to the student of art the fresco is a clear representation of a prince of the Earth and the Spiritual World. The refined features, shapely pointed nose, large eyes,[1] firm lips,[2] beautiful round face, and graceful limbs all indicate high birth, while the expression of peace and serenity pervading the figure is suggestive of the majesty of the spirit. The delineation of the jewellery, especially of the pearl-drops of the diadem and armlets, shows much delicacy of feeling and artistic taste. The pose is equally graceful, and the cause of the bending in this case has been explained by the hand of the Bodhisattva being placed for support on an adjoining figure.

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[1] See *Divyāvadāna*, XII, transl. by Burnouf, Introd., pp. 162 ff. and Rockhill's *The Life of the Buddha*, p. 79.

[2] Vajrapāṇi is one of the divine Bodhisattvas; he is affiliated to the Dhyānī Buddha Akshobhya and the Buddhaśakti Locana. For further particulars see A. Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism* (1st ed.), pp. 48–50, and Grünwedel, *Buddhistiche Kunst* (English Translation), p. 90.

[3] The Bodhisattva with the beautiful hand also holds a flower of exactly the same form.

[4] The Do Thāl and the Tīn Thāl.

[5] According to the Mahāyāna pantheon, Avalokiteśvara is regarded as having emanated from the Dhyānī Buddha Amitābha and his Śakti Pāṇḍarā. For further particulars see Getty, op. cit., pp. 52–66.

[6] For example in Cave II at Ellora.

The complexion is golden-brown,[3] the body in the royal fashion is exposed to the waist, and a striped silk *dhotī* covers the loins. The peeling away of layers near the neck and shoulders has much disfigured the general effect of the picture, but it still abundantly illustrates the poetic conception and exceptional skill of the artist.

The genius of the artist will, however, be better appreciated on studying the minor characters in this subject. For example, the figure of the old minister, below the right hand of the Bodhisattva, is a marvellous piece of art, so vigorous and perfect in technique and so redolent of sagacity in expression. The finely modelled head, with grey hair and sharp features, the chin resting on the back of the hand in a thoughtful mood, the silver brocade garment, all show extraordinary power in conception and skill in execution.

Behind the minister is a rājā offering lotus-flowers to the Bodhisattva. He is tall enough, but quite small in the presence of the Great Being, whose glory has struck him with awe. The features of the rājā are well cut, and his ornaments and dress most becoming, but the contrast between him and the Bodhisattva is very great, and by it the artist has aimed to show the inferiority of worldly pomp and authority. The design of the ear-rings of the rājā, consisting of three separate drops of pearl and sapphire (?) from a small link, is interesting. Again the check and stripe patterns of the cloth in which the flower-tray is wrapped[4] and the design of the robe of the rājā are noteworthy.[5] The material in both cases seems to be silk. The palms of the rājā also are painted, which shows that it was customary to stain them in those days.

Below the figure of the rājā, to the right of the Bodhisattva, is a princess to whom another lady of swarthy complexion is offering lotus-flowers. On account of this feature we gather that the princess is the consort of the Bodhisattva. The artist has delineated the figure with extraordinary skill, not only as regards exquisiteness of form and beauty of artistic detail, but also as regards life-like effect and inner expression.

The contour of the face is most graceful and the features highly refined, while the delineation of the eyes is extremely realistic, the hazel-brown of the pupils and the red of the corners making them almost lifelike. The nose is sharp and the lower lip a little thick. The treatment of the hair at the temples and the nape of the neck in fine curls is most charming. The jewellery also exhibits equally good taste, the pearl tiara with a fine sapphire ornament in the middle being extremely effective.

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[1] The delineation of the eyes and eyebrows is, as usual, conventional.

[2] The colour of the lower lip has faded and the white patch has somewhat marred the beauty of the face.

[3] The palms show the effect of paint.

[4] It is also possible that the tray may be wooden, and the cloth design painted on it.

[5] The sleeves of the robe of the rājā are tight, like that of the *aṅgrakhā*, but there are no laces or opening in front.

The peeling away of the fresco in some places has robbed the picture of a great deal of its charm; but its fine modelling, exquisite ornamentation, and chaste, restful expression undoubtedly place it among the best works of Indian genius; considering its age it may, perhaps, rank high even among the best specimens of the art of the world; but it would be more appropriate if some one who is not an Indian were to express an opinion on this point.

The features of the lady who is offering flowers are too much obliterated for appreciation of their beauty, but among her ornaments the large wheel-shaped ear-rings[1] and the set of ivory bangles, such as are still used by some of the primitive peoples of India,[2] are prominent. There is a lady, at the left-hand side of the Bodhisattva, who also is wearing large ear-rings; the pink-striped design of her skirt (?) is also interesting. A large portion of the head of this figure is destroyed, hence the expression of her face cannot be studied. Below this lady is the figure of a stalwart personage, with broad face and well-defined features. The Bodhisattva has placed his left hand on his shoulder for support. This intimacy suggests that he is an important person, perhaps the general of the army, which supposition seems to be confirmed by the two black straps on his shoulder from which the swords are hung on his back. The metal buckle to be seen on one of these straps is interesting; so is the simple design of the gold chain round the neck of the general (?). He is wearing a long coat,[3] and a gold band adorns his head.[4]

High up on the hills, at the top left-hand corner of the fresco, we see a male and a female figure, probably husband and wife, deeply engaged in conversation; the topic is apparently religious, as is indicated by the conventional loop of the fingers of the male figure. The features of the woman are somewhat obliterated, but her pose is distinct and most charming. The features of the male figure, except the eyes, are well preserved, and represent a handsome face. The beauty of the chin and nose is accentuated by throwing a high light on it. This figure also has a black strap with a buckle on the shoulder.

Above the hills, high up in the clouds, were *apsaras* (flying figures), but they are destroyed now, though the striped blue-silk lower garment of one of them may still be seen.

The colour-sense of the artist seems to be highly refined, and the idea of white flowers on a pale-green background is extremely happy. The blue of the garments and conventional hills is also most charming, while the various tints of brown, golden, chestnut, and clay-colour have been judiciously adapted to represent the complexions.

The creations of this artist, apart from their well-defined features, possess a certain robustness, which makes them striking, especially so in contrast with the delicate and supple figures of the majority of the other artists of Ajanta.

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[1] The ring in the right ear of the Bodhisattva is also of a similar type, and the blue colour of its inner surface indicates a knowledge of enamelling.

[2] Like the *Lambādis* of the Deccan.

[3] In this subject all three male figures, the rājā, minister, and general, are dressed in long coats, apparently as a mark of respect to the Bodhisattva. The point is interesting, for we have noticed in other court scenes that in the presence of the supreme lord minor personages are always properly clad, although he himself is not fully dressed.

[4] Although crowns of most beautiful type were in vogue, the use of head-gear among ordinary persons had not come into fashion. The figures wearing caps invariably represent foreigners in the fresco.

STORY OF A SERPENT KING : CĀMPEYA JĀTAKA

Plates XXXIV–XXXVI *a*

The subject is painted on the back wall of the inner aisle, above the doors of the cells. It is reproduced in three plates, two of them being in colour and one in monochrome.

THE artist has delineated the story in four scenes, following the version of the *Jātaka* in the main,[1] but deviating from it now and then in order to add a touch of romance. In the first scene we see a rājā in low spirits; he has placed his right hand for support on the knee

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[1] The *Jātaka* version in an abridged form is as follows: At a time when the Bodhisattva was one of a poor family, he used to go to the river Campa whereby there lived a Serpent King named Cāmpeya, whose glory impressed the Bodhisattva gradually until he desired to be reborn as the Serpent King. In course of time the Bodhisattva was so reborn, but when this happened his heart was filled with remorse and he observed, 'As a consequence of my good deeds, I have power laid up in the six chief worlds of sense. . . . But see, here am I born in this reptile shape; what care I for life?' The Bodhisattva thought of putting an end to his life, but a young female serpent, named Sumanā, perceiving him so dejected, came to amuse him and gave the lead to others of her kind, who all came and made offering to him, with all manner of musical instruments in their hands. 'That serpents' palace of his became as it were the palace of Sakka; the thought of death left him; he put off his serpent shape and sat on the couch in magnificence of dress and adornment.' In the company of the *Nāginīs* the Bodhisattva often violated his rule of virtue, so he thought of leaving the serpent-world and going to the world of *men*, where he could perform his fasting vows. Accordingly one day he went beyond the frontier village and laid himself on an ant-heap by the high road, saying, 'Those who desire my skin, or any part of me, let them take it, or if any would have me as a dancing snake, let them make me so.' A young Brahman of Benares who had learned the charm for catching a snake happened to pass along that road that day, and on beholding the Serpent King, he recited the charm and approached to catch the Snake. The Serpent King thought that his poison was powerful enough to kill the Brahman, but if he did that his virtue would be violated; so he submitted himself to the Brahman. The latter seized the Snake by the tail and tormented him in various ways, taking out his teeth and squeezing him in order to weaken his strength. Afterwards he laid the Snake in an osier basket and brought him to King Uggasena in Benares. The King watched the dance of the Snake amid a great concourse of people, who were all struck by his performance and showered jewels on him.

Now the *Nāginī* Sumanā, not having seen Cāmpeya for some time, went to the ant-heap, and not finding him even there, thought that he must have been caught by a snake-charmer. She therefore made inquiries, and learning that the Serpent King had been carried by a Brahman to King Uggasena of Benares, she resorted to his court and held herself in the air. The Serpent King as he danced saw Sumanā in the air and being ashamed of his feat suddenly crept into the basket. The King of Benares, noticing the action of the Snake, looked around, and beholding Sumanā poised in the air inquired who she was. Sumanā:

'No Goddess I, nor Titaness, nor human, mighty king!
A female of the serpent kind, come for a certain thing.'

. . . .

'On holy days the Royal Snake
At the four-ways used to take
Holy vows: a juggler caught him:
Free my husband for my sake.'

On hearing this King Uggasena addressed the Brahman snake-charmer thus:

'Justly now and gently, see
I buy the Serpent liberty
With gold, a hundred kine, a village,
That will merit win for me.'

The snake-charmer, learning the virtues of the Bodhisattva in thus humiliating himself, observed:

'I want no gifts, your majesty,
But let the Serpent now go free;
Thus I now release the Serpent.
The deed will meritorious be.'

The Serpent King, being released by the Brahman, crept into a flower and reappeared as a young man magnificently arrayed. Sumanā, coming down from the air, joined him, and they both thanked Uggasena for his courtesy. The of his consort and with the left hand he is making a gesture indicating the wretchedness of his plight. He can easily be identified as the Serpent King, Cāmpeya, of the *Jātaka*, when he puts off his serpent shape and in the enjoyment of a royal life violates the rule of virtue and then deeply regrets his conduct. The expression of the face is dull, which, however, fits in with the remorseful mood of Cāmpeya, but the poorness of the drawing as regards physical features cannot be accounted for, and the treatment of the legs is particularly clumsy. The hair has been delineated in a conventional style, resembling that of the prince prostrating himself before the Pacceka-Buddha in the earlier subject, 'A Rājā going out to attend the Sermon of the Hermit' (Plate XIV).[1] The clayey complexion also is not attractive, and the only relieving feature is the loin-cloth, with its artistic blue border falling in folds on the right leg. The design of the cloth of the cushion on which Cāmpeya is sitting is also interesting: small stars worked out in silk, or gold or silver thread, on a dull yellowish texture, which itself is either of gold or silver thread.

At the right hand of Cāmpeya is his consort (*Nāginī*) sitting on another cushion, which, full and round in its shape, is similar to the rājā's, but the design of the cloth is slightly different, the stars being four-pointed and worked out on a dark background. The pose of the *Nāginī* is artistic: she has placed her hand below her chin and is looking up lovingly at the Serpent King. The features of the figure are, however, obliterated, and the merits of the drawing cannot be studied with close scrutiny.

On the left hand of the rājā is the comic figure of a dwarf, who is presenting something to his lord on a tray. The manner in which he is looking at the rājā shows deep concern. Behind the dwarf, between the pillars, is a female figure, a *Nāginī* (?); but the fresco here is so much damaged that her features cannot be made out.

Behind the rājā are two *chaurī*-bearers, one of a clayey complexion and the other reddish. The figures of both these attendants also are much damaged, and their outlines can be traced with difficulty.

In the corridor to the left of the rājā's pavilion are a mother and child, whom the artist has delineated with great pathos. The mother, Sumanā (?), is grieved at the idea of Cāmpeya's going away to the world of *men* to perform his fasting vows. She is leaning against a pillar in a state of despondency; having placed one of her hands with motherly affection on the head of the child and with the other hand expressing the difficulty of her position. The child is looking up affectionately at the mother. Behind the child there is an attendant of a reddish complexion, who is looking with concern at the *Nāginī*. The characters of the mother and

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King of Benares, being struck by the strangeness of the phenomenon, remarked:

'Superhuman beings may
Hardly win belief, they say.
If you speak the truth, O Serpent,
Where's your palace? Show the way.'

The Bodhisattva by his great power made of seven precious things an enclosing wall round his palace and had the approach and gates gloriously adorned, and then he conducted Uggasena to the abode of serpents. On entering the palace he offered divine victuals and drink to the guests, who enjoyed them for seven days. Afterwards, when Uggasena wished to return to Benares, the Great Being, loading his treasure in several hundred carts, sent it with the king. For the full version, see Cowell, op. cit., iv. 281–90.

[1] *Supra*, p. 19.

child do not appear in the version of the *Jātaka* quoted, but the artist may have adopted them from some other version of the story.

The colours of this subject, except the blues, which are invariably fresh at Ajanta, have a faded tint, but their artistic charm is not lost when showing the autumn effect in the leaves of the tree behind the mother and child.

The second scene represents Rājā Uggasena of Benares watching the performance of the Snake amidst a great concourse of people. The artist has omitted here the portion of the story relating to Cāmpeya's laying himself on an ant-heap and his being caught and tormented by the Brahman snake-charmer, apparently to avoid repetition, a similar episode having already been delineated on the back wall of the left aisle in the Śaṅkhapāla Jātaka (Plate XI).[1]

On the rock wall this scene is separated from the last by red and white blocks, representing conventionally either hills or rows of buildings. The figure of Uggasena is damaged, the head being totally missing and layers having peeled off from several parts of his body. His amazement at the performance of the Snake is, however, clear from the gesture of his right hand, and the artist will be interested also in the beautiful folds of his *dhotī* (loin-cloth) and the fish-head design of the back of his throne.[2] In front of the rājā is a reddish figure, probably the chief minister. He is squatting on the floor, with both legs crossed, and while listening to the rājā he is looking sideways at the Snake and expressing wonder by his hand. The pose and features of this figure show great ingenuity on the part of the artist. At the left-hand side of the minister is another courtier, whose features also have been delineated with great cleverness. He is looking with rapt attention at the rājā, and sitting in a posture different from that of the minister; his right leg is resting, folded up, on the ground, while the left is doubled up, the foot being placed flat on the ground and the knee raised. The frilled ends of the loin-cloths of both these figures are interesting.

Behind the minister are two attendants, one of a ruddy complexion [3] and the other dark greyish. These figures are much damaged, but the portions which are intact show great skill. To the right of these attendants there are two guards, dressed in long coats; one of them is armed with a sword and the other with an incurved dagger. These figures are also much damaged.

Below, near the right corner, we see the snake-charmer with a basket and a white serpent in front of him. His pose is rather unusual; while sitting on his haunches his left leg is bent and he is kneeling on it. The artist has aimed at showing the different poses adopted by Indians when sitting on the ground. The snake-charmer seems to be a young man, his delineation agreeing with the description of the young Brahman snake-charmer of the *Jātaka*, but, the head of the figure being somewhat damaged, further remarks on this point cannot be hazarded.

Below the throne of the king are two figures whose racial traits and dress are very characteristic. The features of one of them, the nose, the eyes, the moustache, and the tuft of hair on the crown of his head, are so typical that even to-day he might be taken for a citizen of Benares. His *aṅgrakhā* of silver brocade, with floral patterns of silk worked out in it, again, is reminiscent of the dress and special brocade industry of the place. The features of the other figure are like those of a Brahman of Orissa. The style of his hair and the manner in which he has thrown a part of his *dhotī* over his shoulder are also characteristic of the Orissa people. The poses of these figures are extremely interesting, particularly the homely way in which the Oriyā is sitting and looking at his Benares comrade.

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[1] *Supra*, pp. 13–14.

[2] The artistic frill of the *dhotī* will be better appreciated by looking at the monochrome reproduction (Plate XXXVI *a*).

[3] In the upper part of his ear he is wearing small rings, such as are still in vogue among the Hindus in certain parts of India.

Behind the rājā we notice a group of ladies, among whom a mother and child are prominent. According to the *Jātaka*, Sumanā, the favourite consort of Cāmpeya, appears at the snake-dance which is performed before Uggasena, King of Benares, but she holds herself in the air like a divine being. Here the artist has painted Sumanā like a human being, walking on the ground with her child and talking to the ladies of the palace about the release of her husband. The head of the mother is damaged, but the manner in which she is looking up and in which she holds the child clearly shows that she is appealing to the rājā in a human vein, saying something like this: 'If for no other consideration the Bodhisattva can be released, he should be released at least for the sake of this child.' The pose of the two female figures near the mother indicates that they are deeply stirred by her pathetic appeal. One of these ladies is dressed in a long robe, the texture and design of the cloth of which are worthy of notice. It appears to be a very thin fabric, and the patterns, consisting of small flowers arranged in diagonal belts, are interwoven in it.[1] The treatment of her hands seems somewhat crude, but by her gesture the artist has designed to show the commotion of her feelings. The coils of her hair are very artistic, as is the hair of the mother, whose blue bodice is also very effective. The child is wearing a pair of socks or long boots, the upper ends of which are marked by a dark line.[2]

The third scene of the story is painted below the first and second. Commencing at the left side we notice a grove of beautiful trees, among which the banana, areca-nut, and *aśoka* are prominent. A pink elephant also is to be seen here, the *mahāwat*, holding a goad, still perched on its head, but Cāmpeya and his royal guest Uggasena have descended from the animal and they are to be seen outside a white doorway of Dravidian style.[3] The fresco being damaged, the figure of Uggasena is indistinct, but Cāmpeya can be recognized by the halo of *nāga* hoods.

To the right of the doorway is the royal hall filled with ladies and attendants. In the middle Cāmpeya is initiating Uggasena into the mysteries of the faith, as is shown by his *teaching* attitude. The features of these two figures are obliterated, but those of some of the ladies are fairly well preserved and illustrate the imagination and skill of the artist. For example, the figure of a young lady above the right shoulder of Cāmpeya is most charming. Her features are exquisite, and the high light thrown on her chin, lips, nose, and forehead has given almost a divine effulgence to her face. The pose is equally graceful: with the right hand she is balancing a stick, while the left is raised in a pretty manner towards her chin; the fingers of this hand are most artistically delineated. Below this lady is another of a reddish complexion, who is listening with great attention to the esoteric teaching of Cāmpeya. Her face also is very sweet, and the way in which she is looking up at the Serpent King is most effective.

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[1] The patterns of the cloth cannot be traced in the reproduction, but they are distinct on the fresco.

[2] The use of socks and long boots indicates the influence of the foreigners, *Yavanas* and *Śakas*.

[3] The architecture of this doorway and of the hall inside is reminiscent of the rock-hewn and structural temples of the Deccan even up to the 10th century A.D.

Behind the Serpent King we notice the comic face of a dwarf, who has twisted his eyebrows in order to show his indifference to the serious sermon of Cāmpeya. The features of the dwarf are somewhat flat, his hair is curly, and he is holding a sword with a jewelled handle much too long for his tiny stature. At the left hand of the dwarf behind Cāmpeya is a lady of reddish complexion, holding a pearl necklace in her right hand and a tray with a cover in her left. A cobra hood above her head indicates that she is a *Nāginī*, and the jewels in her hands are apparently to be presented to Uggasena. The features of this lady are somewhat obliterated, but her head-ornament (*jhūmar?*)[1] is clear, and will interest a student of Indian jewellery.

On the left-hand side of this lady, behind King Uggasena, is a guard; although his features are somewhat indistinct, his cap, with a round brim and peaked top, clearly indicates that he is a foreigner. He is dressed in a long coat with tight sleeves,[2] and armed with a sword, the jewelled handle of which is prominent.

Behind Uggasena, at the right-hand side of the fresco, is a group of five women, two of whom are sitting and three standing. Of those who are sitting one is of a fair complexion, and she is listening with interest to the conversation going on between Cāmpeya and his royal guest. The other woman is of a pale-brown complexion, and her features are exquisitely drawn, the treatment of the fingers being particularly charming.

Among the women who are standing, two are carrying trays, and their poses are extremely graceful. The figure of the third standing woman is somewhat obliterated, so that it is difficult to judge her bearing with certainty, but one of her hands seems to be closed, while the other is stretched out in an appealing fashion.

Behind the two women who are carrying trays there is a male servant, whose features and head-gear and the three horizontal paint-streaks on his forehead are interesting. His face is typical of the Brahmans of Kāśī, and such caps (*kanṭop*) are still in use on ceremonial occasions.

According to the *Jātaka* the story ends with the return of Uggasena to Benares, after he had received choice gifts and vast treasures from the Serpent King; but on the rock wall the sequel of the story is painted in another scene (Plate X *b*), the purpose of which cannot be determined with certainty, for the fresco is much damaged. It may represent the fulfilment of Cāmpeya's wish after his great sacrifice in the *Nāga* world to be reborn as man:

> 'Not for life or sons or pelf
> Do I wrestle with myself;
> 'Tis my craving, if I can,
> To be born again as Man.'

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[1] This ornament may be a *kalghī* (crest), but that is generally worn by men.

[2] The cloth of the coat seems to be silk (*mashrū'*) with a pale background and flowers interwoven in it. It might however, be *kamkhwāb* (gold or silver brocade).

We see a rājā without any halo of cobra hoods, from which it may be gathered that the Bodhisattva is reborn as man, while to show his association with the *Nāga* world in his previous birth the artist has painted several *Nāga* chiefs and queens,[1] who are paying homage to the Bodhisattva. One *Nāginī* is presenting him with a short sword.

As the fresco is badly damaged in all the four scenes the skill of the artist cannot be fully estimated, but some of the figures which are intact prove him to be an artist of great merit. For example, the pale-brown lady standing at the right hand of Cāmpeya in the third scene (Plate XXXV) is a masterpiece; again, the delineation of the citizen of Benares and the Oriyā Brahman in the second scene (Plates XXXIV *b* and XXXVI *a*) is very successful, and shows close study of their ethnographic features.

FRESCO IN THE RIGHT AISLE: *NOT IDENTIFIED*

Plate XXXVI *b*

THIS fresco does not seem to have been completed, for many of the figures show only the reddish outlines or the first light washes of colour. Again, as it is badly damaged it is difficult to interpret properly the story delineated therein. Commencing from the left side, we notice a *Nāga* king with two hermits, one of whom is receiving a gift from the king. The drawing of the figure of this hermit shows great skill. A little to the right of this is another scene representing a king sitting on a throne. There are also two attendants and four elephants with pink skins. The treatment of the heads and trunks of the elephants is very realistic, and the different poses of their bodies show play of fancy. Below these four elephants two young ones are painted, the skins of which are white. Farther to the right we notice a big cavalcade, including infantry, horsemen, and elephant-riders, like an army on the march. The trunks of the elephants in this scene also are painted with great care, and the treatment of their legs indicates rapid movement.

Proceeding farther towards the right, we notice the outer court of a palace, with a large assemblage wherein the outlines of some horses may also be traced. The fresco is much damaged here, but some human figures are intact, and the high light on their foreheads, noses, lips, and chin is interesting. The treatment of the fingers is also highly ingenious, their position, curves, and loops varying in the case of each figure and suggesting different expressions. The features are uniformly sharp, and pearl necklaces, large ear-rings and bangles (*kaṛās*), in pairs or singly, appear on the body of each. One of the figures is dressed in a robe (or sheet) with the right shoulder exposed;[2] he is holding a flower (lotus) in his right hand, and may represent a Bodhisattva.

At the right end of the wall is painted the last scene of this story, representing a rājā and rānī in the interior of a palace. The figure of the rājā is almost destroyed, but that of his consort is in part preserved, and shows much grace and ingenuity in its delineation. The pose

[1] The hood of the cobra is the distinguishing sign for a *Nāga*.

[2] The figure below the head of the horse at the right side of the reproduction (Plate XXXVI *a*).

has a series of curves, all having a charming effect and adding to the supple elegance of the figure (Plate X *c*). The rānī is looking up sweetly at her husband, who is explaining to her some religious principle. There are a few other figures in this scene, but all of them too fragmentary to throw any light on the subject of the painting.

The work of this artist, so far as preserved, is characterized by a love of beauty and grace in the delineation of form, but as regards expression his creations are rather dull; this, however, may be due to the fresco being in the first place not completed, and again to its having been damaged by various causes in later times.

A PALACE SCENE: *NOT IDENTIFIED*

Plate XXXVII

The subject is painted on the right wall of the front aisle, and is reproduced in colour.

THE story depicted in this fresco has not been identified, but its religious nature is apparent from the expressions of its characters. We notice a rājā sitting on a throne in a homely manner, his right leg being curved under him on the throne and the left resting on the ground. Although the head of the figure is partly destroyed, the features which are preserved show a thoughtful mood, which is further demonstrated by the gestures of his fingers; the right hand, partly closed, suggests a mystery, and the fingers of the left are stretched out as if to feel or catch the object about which he is thinking. The drawing of the figure of the rājā does not exhibit a happy sense of proportion, and the fingers are particularly long.

In front of the rājā is his consort, sitting on a green cushion. Her pose is very graceful, and her features are also agreeable, though with some exaggeration, as in the case of the eyes, hands, and toes. The treatment of the back and the waist may appear somewhat voluptuous, as also the dark coils of hair spread on the shoulders, and the gauze-like material of the loin-cloth; but the calm restraint of the face counterbalances that feeling. The position of the left arm may strike a European as unusual, but those familiar with Indian habits know that such a pose is quite common. The strands of ribbon coiled on the back have a pleasing effect and show the artist's fancy.

Between the rājā and rānī a female figure may be noticed, perhaps representing a maid of honour. She is wearing rich jewellery, and lotus-flowers decorate her hair; but her complexion is dark brown and her features coarse, suggesting an inferior position. The eyes of this figure also are much too large for the face.

Behind the maid there are two more female attendants, the features of both being coarse. One of them is holding a fan; but, instead of holding it by the lower end of its handle, she holds it near the middle, and she has also bent her arm in an unusual curve. The other maid is looking up at some object.

Close to these maids is a male servant, dressed in a white robe and carrying a metal (?)

box with a fluted lid.[1] His head-gear is interesting; it is either a part of his cape-like cloak or a separate long cap styled in India the *kanṭop*. His complexion is fair, and he may be a foreigner.

At the left hand of this servant, behind the rānī, is a female *chaurī*-bearer; though her pose is graceful, her features do not suggest a sound sense of proportion, and her expression also is dull; she is staring in a stolid manner. Below the throne of the rānī are two female dwarfs; one of them, of fair complexion, is carrying a basket or box of a fluted design on her left shoulder and has a blue lotus-flower in her right hand. The features of both figures are crude, and they are poor specimens of art.

There is a *chaurī*-bearer behind the throne of the rājā as well, but as the head of the figure is destroyed her expression cannot be studied. The pose is graceful, and the proportions of the limbs are better than those of the other figures in this fresco. The drawing of the waist is, however, of the same style as that of the queen and of the *chaurī*-bearer behind her, which shows that the artist is following a certain type and has no originality. Behind her is a dwarf of reddish complexion, who is carrying in his right hand a round vessel with a lid. The fresco is here damaged, but the features which are preserved show neither beauty of drawing nor force of expression.

There is another female *chaurī*-bearer squatting on the ground below the throne of the rājā. Her mood is the same as that of other figures of this fresco, and it would appear that the artist was incapable of giving appropriate expressions to his creations. In front of this figure we notice an urn-shaped vessel with a pair of rings in its rim, suggesting that it is of considerable weight, the rings being meant for lifting it up. There is also a tumbler, probably of metal, placed by this vessel.

The fresco is interesting as showing a stage in the history of art when progress has ceased, and the artist, instead of exhibiting any originality, endeavours to produce a pleasing effect in his work by copying the designs of previous masters. The vivid imagination and force of expression which are so distinctly perceptible in the frescoes near the shrine (Plates XXIV-XXXIII) are missing here, and the art is rather mechanical than spontaneous.

On the right side of the wall, separated from the last subject by a grilled window of conventional design,[2] a pastoral scene is painted in which we see twelve oxen of different colours—red, green, and white.[3] There are also two cowherds, one of a ruddy complexion and the other greenish.[4] The drawing of the subject is poor, and it is apparently a continuation of the previous fresco by the same artist.

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[1] Metal boxes of this type are still found in India.

[2] *Supra*, p. 11.

[3] This scene is not reproduced in Plate XXXVII.

[4] For the red and green complexions see p. 28 note 4.

A COURT SCENE: PERSIAN EMBASSY (?)

Plate XXXVIII

The subject is painted on the wall of the front aisle, on the right-hand side of the main entrance, and being much damaged it is reproduced in monochrome only.

THIS scene has been the subject of a great deal of controversy among scholars. One class favours the opinion that as some foreigners appear in this fresco offering presents to an Indian king, the scene may represent the embassy of the Persian king Khusrau to the Chālukyan rājā Pulakeśin in the beginning of the seventh century A.D.[1] Scholars of the rival group do not see the possibility of the delineation of any historical event on the rock-walls of Ajanta, and are sanguine that the scene represents a *Jātaka* which may some day be identified. The glorious period of the Ajanta frescoes in general, and of the paintings in Cave I in particular, coincides with the rule of the Vākāṭaka dynasty, and even if the date of this fresco, judging from its style, may be fixed at a later period (A.D. 600), there is little chance of the portrait of Pulakeśin, who was a Hindu by religion, having been painted in a Buddhist monastery at Ajanta.[2] At the same time there is no doubt that the figures of foreigners represented in the scene bear a very striking resemblance to the people of Turkistan and some other countries to the north-west of India, and as in the frescoes the artists have invariably delineated Buddhist stories, adopting characters from contemporary life, the presence of these foreigners seems to mark a period when the people of the Deccan had acquired familiarity with the inhabitants of the countries north-west of India. Such a supposition gains strength by reference to historical records, for in the early centuries of the Christian era Śaka satrapies were established in Surāshtra and Mālwā, in close vicinity to the Deccan, and the artists of Ajanta must have known intimately foreigners of the type represented in the frescoes.[3]

To describe the scene: if we commence from the right-hand side, we first notice a party of foreigners outside the gate of a court-hall, among whom two are prominent by their peaked caps. Their complexions are fair, and their features such that they appear to be inhabitants of countries to the north-west of India. Two of the party have entered the court through the gate; one of them is armed with a long sword suspended from his belt, and the other, following him, is carrying a tray of presents. The court is full of dignitaries and attendants, and at the head of the hall a rājā is sitting on a throne. In the middle of the assembly we notice three foreigners, one of whom, in the front, is presenting a pearl ornament to the rājā. ·He is wearing a peaked cap of striped silk or broad cloth, and his long coat (*qabā*) also is of the same material, its stripes of blue and black occurring alternately on a white background. His complexion is pinkish, and the beard is prominent in a tuft on the chin. The second figure, in the middle, is dressed in a *qabā* of green broadcloth, and his cap is white, with a coloured band round the brim. His features are similar to those of his leader, and the growth of beard is more prominent on the chin than on the cheeks. The third foreigner is carrying a tray full of jewellery; the cast of his features and his gait are typical of the people of Turkistan. He is clad in a white *qabā* and green cap.

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[1] Smith's *Early History of India* (fourth ed.), p. 442.

[2] This point is further discussed on p. 49.

[3] *Ibid.*

The figure of the rājā is much damaged and the portion representing the head has largely peeled off. The expression of his face therefore cannot be studied, but the gesture of his left hand, with forefinger raised, shows that he is warning the foreigners about some shortcoming, and they all look awe-stricken. The rājā himself is sitting at ease, squatting on the throne with his legs crossed, and leaning on a pillow which is behind his back; his right hand also rests on the same pillow. The ruffle of the lower end of his *dhotī* is artistic, but it appears that this treatment had become conventional, for it is to be seen in several frescoes.

The dimensions of the throne, calculating from the stature of the rājā and that of the *chaurī*-bearer sitting immediately below it, seem to be about 5 ft. in length, 3½ ft. in breadth, and about 1¾ ft. in height. The black and white stripes along the edge suggest the decoration of the throne with ebony and ivory plaques, while its main body may have been built of sandalwood. The back of the throne is rather elaborate; the oval panel at the top is gilt and set with jewels, while the little figures of dwarfs on each side of it seem to have been carved in ebony. The throne has no carpet or ornamental covering, like the *masnad* of later times; there is placed in the middle only a striped silk cushion (*āsan*), on which the rājā is sitting.

Behind the throne of the rājā are two attendants; one of them is holding a *chaurī* and the other a square fan which has a long green handle. Their features are too much obliterated to allow us to judge of the skill of the artist in their delineation. On the left side of the fan-holder there is another *chaurī*-bearer of fair complexion, and close to her, on the same side, is another attendant wearing a long blue coat with a red girdle. To the right of these figures, almost in front of the throne, is an important official, either the body-guard of the rājā or the court chamberlain, holding a long green staff in his hand. At his left hand we notice six more attendants, one of whom has folded his hands across his chest. His complexion is dark, and for contrast the artist has covered his head with a red scarf and also given a red tint to his necklace and armlets. Another of these attendants, standing near the door, is holding a banner, the streamers of which are flying out.

Below the throne of the rājā we see a female *chaurī*-bearer, squatting on the floor and looking sideways at the audience. She appears to be dressed in a *sārī* (?) the upper part of which she has rolled and thrown across her back and shoulders in the form of a belt. Near her is an urn-shaped vessel with an ornamental bracket-like projection at its base. Behind the *chaurī*-bearer, near the foot of the throne, is another attendant holding a circular vessel on which figures of elephants are to be seen. The vessel seems to be of metal, the figures being stamped in relief on it. The lid of the vessel is conical, and it has flutings on its surface. Behind this attendant there are three more, sitting on the ground, but their features are too indistinct to reveal any artistic skill. To the right of these attendants, near the door, is a standing figure holding a staff. He is looking up at the foreigner who is entering through the gate, and the gesture of his right hand suggests that he is insisting on some point of court etiquette.

On the left side, near the throne of the rājā, is a female figure holding a tray in her lap. By her side is placed another tray on which some small caskets,[1] probably containing jewellery, may be seen. The breast-band (*brassière*) of this woman is interesting. Behind her is another woman, but the fresco is here so much damaged that her features cannot be studied for purposes of criticism.

The exit from the court is perhaps on the left side of the fresco, where we notice a foreigner going out of a door.[2] The pillars of the court-hall seem to be of black wood (ebony?); the artist in their delineation, instead of giving an ink-wash, has indicated the colour by a series of dark lines which are very effective. Similarly he has shown the blue colour of the capitals of the pillars by small dots. Although fine brush-work is visible here and there, yet the drawing, speaking generally, is somewhat flat and does not show any great artistic skill. The sizes of the dramatis personae and their positions in the picture, on the other hand, exhibit considerable thought and care, and the subject may be admired for its ensemble.[3]

A BACCHANALIAN SCENE (KHUSRAU AND SHĪRĪN?) AND DECORATIVE *MOTIFS*

Plate XXXIX

These themes are delineated on the ceiling, and have been reproduced in colour in two half-plates.

IT is interesting to note that the artists of Ajanta, unlike their rivals in Europe, refrained from painting religious subjects on a ceiling, although this would seem to be the most appropriate place for the delineation of a divine theme. The exact reasons for this attitude may be difficult to advance, but on wall-surfaces it would certainly have been easier for the pilgrims to notice the various scenes depicting the life of the Master or the stories of his previous births (*Jātakas*), and to show their reverence to them in ceremonial style as they were conducted from aisle to aisle, than to do so if the subjects had been painted on the ceiling. Again, the gods of the Buddhist pantheon, as observed elsewhere, being essentially human in their character, the wall-surfaces, being near the ground, are, for the delineation of their dwellings and environment, more suitable than the sublime spaces of a ceiling, which would be suitable only for the abode of ethereal beings.

The paintings of the ceilings at Ajanta have therefore been executed in a purely decorative style, and the artist, having no religious restrictions to observe, has given play to his fancy in an endless variety of form and colour. We see human beings of fantastic shape, most quaintly dressed, dancing or clapping, or sipping wine from large cups in which their aquiline noses seem to be dipped; birds and animals of exquisite design in most frolicsome attitudes, nestling, sporting, and dallying; flowers and fruits of the choicest form and colour with all the setting of their beautiful foliage; and last, but not least, jewellery designs and geometric patterns and devices, varying from the simplest to the most elaborate, among which the key-pattern may strike one as bearing resemblance to its prototype in Greek art.

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[1] One of them has a domical lid with a knob at the top; it resembles the *khāṣ-dān* (betel-case) of the present day.

[2] This door is not reproduced in Plate XXXVIII.

[3] Below this subject was a bazaar scene, which is destroyed now, though a line of shops may be traced. The bazaar scene is not included in Plate XXXVIII.

PLATE XXXIX

Mr. Griffiths in his monumental work, *The Ajanta Paintings*, has devoted a complete volume to reproductions of this decorative detail, and as the plates therein are quite faithful, as regards both drawing and colour, we have from fear of repetition refrained from reproducing the whole of the ceiling of Cave I in this work, but to give our readers some idea of its general character we show two panels.

One of these represents a Bacchanalian scene, which, like the 'Court Scene' previously discussed (Plate XXXVIII),[1] has been the subject of great difference of opinion among archaeologists. Some of them have identified the figures shown therein as those of Khusrau and his beautiful consort Shīrīn. [This view is mainly based on the information given by the historian Ṭabarī, that the fame of the King of the Deccan (Pulakeśin II) spread beyond the limits of India and reached the ears of Khusrau II, King of Persia, who in the thirty-sixth year of his reign, A.D. 625–6, received a complimentary embassy from Pulakeśin II. The courtesy was subsequently reciprocated by a return embassy sent from Persia, which was received with due honour at the Indian Court.[2] The exact year of this return embassy is not given, but it must have taken place two or three years after the Indian embassy attended the Persian Court, so that the event may be assigned roughly to A.D. 630, and the painting of the scene on the walls and ceiling of Cave I to a still later date.] This view becomes practically untenable when we compare the styles of the architecture, sculpture, and painting of this cave with those of others which bear inscriptions; or, again, if we take into consideration the fact that during the reigns of the early Chālukyas (A.D. 550–750) Buddhism, although professed by a considerable section of the population, gradually declined and Hinduism grew popular. Magnificent temples were at that time erected and dedicated to Vishṇu, Śiva, and other members of the Purānic pantheon.[3]

The presence of foreigners, resembling Bactrians or Persians (?),[4] in the frescoes at Ajanta can, however, be easily explained by the fact that Buddhism, within a few centuries after the death of Gautama, penetrated into the regions to the north-west of India, and its votaries in those distant countries began to visit the sacred sites of India as pilgrims. Again, the establishment of Śaka satrapies in Surāshtra and Mālwā in the early centuries of the Christian era, and the domination of the Huns in the fifth century A.D.,[5] leave no reason to reject the view that the inhabitants of the Deccan were familiar with the people of the north-west countries long before the embassy of Khusrau to King Pulakeśin in the seventh century A.D.

To describe the scene as painted: we notice a chief sitting on a well-padded cushion or divan,[6] and holding a cup, apparently of wine, in his right hand. His nose is somewhat flat and his cheeks sunken, and although the beard is full, the general contour of the face proves him to be of Turanian race rather than Persian. The expression of the face is somewhat dull, perhaps suggestive of the stupor resulting from having drunk too much wine. He is wearing a long coat (*qabā*), of pale-blue broadcloth, the collar, arm-bands, and cuffs of which are of a lighter colour and probably embroidered. The cap is peaked and similar to the *kulāh* of the countries north-west of India, and on his legs there are either stockings or soft leather long boots, which also are suggestive of the habit of the people of the same countries. He has a belt round his waist, from which a sword is hung, and there is also a shield on his back.

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[1] *Supra*, p. 46.

[2] Smith's *Early History of India* (fourth ed.), pp. 442–3; *J.R.A.S.*, April 1879; and Burgess's *Notes on the Bauddha Rock Temples of Ajanta* (A.S.W.I., No. 9, Bombay, 1879), pp. 92–3.

[3] The great cave-temple of Bādāmi, dedicated to Vishṇu, was hewn out at the instance of the Chālukya king Maṅgalīśa in Saka *saṁvat* 500 (A.D. 579), *Ind. Ant.*, vol. iii, pp. 305 ff.

[4] According to Fergusson they represent Sasanians, while Rajendralal Mitra supposed them to be Bactrians. Burgess's *Notes on the Bauddha Rock Temples of Ajanta*, pp. 26–7.

[5] Toramāṇa established himself as a ruler of Mālwā at the end of the fifth century.

[6] The check-pattern design of the sides suggests that it is a cushion or mattress rather than a divan.

A handsome fair lady is sitting by this chief and looking amorously into his face. She has her right hand on his shoulder and with the left she is suggesting something agreeable to her lord. The features of this lady are partially effaced, but the dress is fairly distinct; she is wearing a white tunic with long sleeves, the collar, cuffs, and arm-bands of which are embroidered and finished with trimmings. The ends of ribbon flying at her back are interesting.[1] Behind the lady may be seen the embroidered end of the bolster, against which she and the chief are leaning.

At her left hand, below the divan, is a female attendant of graceful features, who is holding a wine-flagon and stooping forward as if to replenish the cup of the chief as soon as it is empty. The dress of this attendant is interesting. She is wearing a round cap of red material (broadcloth or velvet) with a white border, which is either of fur or some woollen material. A white plume springs from the top of the cap. Her upper garment is a long coat with tight sleeves; it is embroidered at the collar, shoulders, and cuffs. The lower garment is a long white skirt with a frilled border of pale-blue colour. The style of the skirt may suggest Greek influence, but it is difficult to affirm this with any authority, for no data are available regarding the dress of the people of the North-West before the advent of the Greeks.

In front of the divan are two burly figures of rather Mongol type, with small eyes, short noses, and prominent cheeks. The beards are, however, full. They are holding trays of dessert and looking with attention at the chief. Their looks are stupid, and the artist has apparently given them this expression to impart a comic effect to the subject. They are wearing white skull-caps and long coats (*qabās*), one of the latter being white and the other pale blue. Between these two figures the carved (or painted) cover of a tray may also be observed.

On the right hand of the chief, below the divan, is another female attendant who is also holding a wine-flagon, but of a different shape from that held by the attendant standing near the lady. The features of this woman are rather coarse, but her dress is similar to that of her rival, except that the skirt has a double frill near the border.[2]

The background shows a wall or curtain with red flowers. The devices at the four corners of the scene give a fair idea of the artist's play of fancy. The pair of geese with foliated tails, looking at one another amorously, are extremely effective; so are the bunches of mangoes, pomegranates, and pine-apples amid foliage of great beauty.

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[1] Burgess writes that the triangular-shaped streamers or banderoles, appearing on their coins as well, are characteristic of Iranian art; but the device, like the key-pattern *motif* of Greek art which is also to be found at Ajanta, may have been introduced into India before the embassy of Khusrau II in the seventh century A.D.

[2] This scene with slight variations is painted at three other places on the ceiling of this cave. But as several other *motifs* have been repeated in the ceiling, the recurrence indicates only the fondness of the artist for this theme.

The designs in the other panel (Plate XXXIX *b*) are still more varied and graceful. In the middle we see two pairs of freakish animals sporting with one another; their heads are like those of oxen, but lower down the bodies terminate in a foliated device of great delicacy. At the right and left of this theme are two jewellery designs representing chased gold-work set with sapphires and rubies. At the top may also be seen a parrot perched on a lotus-stalk, the flowers of which have been drawn with great skill. The figures of two little dwarfs, holding a *tête-à-tête*, which are in the top left corner, are cut in the reproduction (Plate XXXIX *b*), but another of their kin may be noticed, in the bottom row, playing with a large lotus-flower.

The arrangement of the panels and the variety of the *motifs*, as regards form and colour, have an almost kaleidoscopic effect, and the fancy and skill of the artist cannot be too highly praised. As the ceiling is absolutely flat, it seems to follow inevitably that he painted the subject lying flat on a scaffolding.[1]

A BULL-FIGHT

Plate XL *a*

The subject is painted on the capital of the second pillar from the top left corner of the hall, and is reproduced in monochrome.

THE artists of Ajanta have shown great fondness for painting animal life, and the present subject is a good example of their skill in this line. We notice two bulls engaged in a close fight; the postures of both of them are identical, and the delineation of their bodies is full of force; the lowered heads, the contracted muscles and raised tails all conveying tense fury. The curves of the necks, humps, and tails are very vigorous, while the fine brush-lines indicating the wrinkles of the skin of the necks and forelegs are extremely pleasing. The subject is most spirited, and its technique shows that the artist understood modelling.

The representation of two bulls engaged in combat is also to be seen in a cave at Bhāja,[2] but the treatment is not so realistic as here.[3] A bull-fight is also painted in the Maḥall-i-Khāṣṣ, Fatehpur Sīkrī, and although it is a thousand years later than its prototype at Ajanta it lacks the force of expression of the latter.[4]

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[1] The painting of a vaulted surface is not so difficult, and it can be done with ease either standing or sitting; but to paint an absolutely flat ceiling is extremely tiring, for the head must be thrown back at a considerable angle to draw the subject correctly.

[2] Fergusson's *Cave Temples of India*, p. 519, Plate XCVI.

[3] In the Louvre are fragments of sculpture from a Doric temple at Assos in the Troad, erected in the fifth or sixth century B.C., in which are shown two bulls, engaged in fighting, similar to the painting at Ajanta, *vide* Griffith's *Ajanta Paintings*.

[4] *Ibid.*, fig. 87.

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INDEX

Abhaya, a religious attitude, 34 *n.*[2]
Ahmad, Syed, vii; copies of the paintings by, v, vi, 11
Ajanta, the caves: description of Cave I, 2–3; general description, 1–3; sculpture, 2; situation, 1
—, the paintings: on the capital of a pillar, 51; on the ceiling, 48–51; copies, previous, v, xi, xiv; damage, v–vi, xi; aesthetics, xi–xix; Hellenistic influence, xv–xvi, 48; Italian affinities, xvi–xvii, 31; materials used, 1–2; method of executing, 2; reproduction by colour photography, v, vi, xiv; restoration, vi
Akbar Yar Jung Bahadur, Nawab, vii
Alāra, painting of, 14
Alligator, representation of an, 23
aṅgīya, bodice, 17, 17 *n.*, 21 *n.*
aṅgrakha, coat, 22 *n.*[1], 41
Animals, representations of: alligator, 23; antelopes, 18, 19; bulls, 51; deer, 3, 3 *n.*[1]; doves, 33; elephants, 18, 41, 43; geese, 501; goats, 24; horses, 18, 22, 43; lion, 29; monkeys, 29; owl, 31; oxen, 14, 51; peacocks, 7, 29; pigeon, 4–7; serpents, 13–14, 38–43; sharks, 23
Antelopes, representations of, 18, 19
Architecture in the paintings, 17, 25, 48
Areca-nut palms, representations of, 30, 41
Armlets, representations of, 5, 10 *n.*[1], 15, 36
ārsī, thumb-ring, 16
aśoka tree, representations of the, 30, 41
Attitudes, Buddha in various, 34–5
Avalokiteśvara (?), painting of, 33–4

Bacchanalian scene, a, 48–51
baddhīs, flower-strings, 14
Banana-trees, representations of, 7, 25, 41
Band, gold, representation of a, 37
Bangles, representations of, 10 *n.*[1], 12, 15, 37, 43
Barnett, Dr. L. D., vii
Baskets, representations of, 17, 33, 40, 45
bāzūbands, armlets, 10 *n.*[1]
Belts, representations of, 19, 47, 50
Benares brocades, 10, 12
Bhikshu at a palace door, a, 8–9
Bhūsparśa, a religious attitude, 34 *n.*[2]
Binyon, Laurence, vii
Boat, representation of a, 23
Bodhisattva, a, 33–4
Bodhisattva, offering of lotus-flowers to the, 35–7
Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi, 27–30
Bodices, representations of, 8, 12, 14, 21, 28, 41
Bolster, representation of a, 50.
Boots, representations of, 41, 50
Bow and arrows, representation of a, 33
Bowl, representation of a, 25
Box, representation of a, 44–5
Breast-band, representation of a, 48
Brocades, 10, 15, 19, 20, 21, 42 *n.*[2]
Browne, O. H., vi
Buckles, representations of, 37
Buddha in various attitudes, 34–5
Buddha, temptation of, 30–3
Bull-fight, a, 51

Cāmpeya, painting of, 38–43
Capital of a pillar, painting on the, 51
Caps, representations of, 37 *n.*[4], 42, 45, 46, 47, 50; skull-, 26
Caskets, representations of, 48
Cecconi, Prof. Lorenzo, restoration of the paintings by, vi
Ceiling paintings, 48–51
Chains, gold, representations of, 10 *n.*[1], 12, 37.
chārjāma, saddle, 19 *n.*[3]
chaṭā'ī, matting, 25
chaurī, fly-whisk, representations of the, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 21, 22, 24, 29, 45, 47
Chinese art, xii, xv, xvi, xvii, xviii
cholī, bodice, 17, 17*n.*
Cloak, representation of a, 45
Coats, representations of, 6, 9, 19, 20, 22, 29, 37, 40, 41, 42, 46, 47, 50
Coiffure, treatment of the, in the paintings, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 19, 21, 25, 27, 32, 33, 34, 41
Collar, jewelled, representation of a, 10 *n.*[1]
Conches, representations of, 17, 22
Coomaraswamy, A., on the paintings at Ellora, xv
Cosmetics: henna, 16, 16 *n.*[1], 18 *n.*[2], 21; *missī*, 21; *pān*, 21; *surma*, 29
Costume, articles of, representations of: belts, 19, 47, 50; bodices, 8, 12, 14, 21, 28, 41; boots, 41, 50; breast-band, 48; buckles, 37; caps, 37 *n.*[4], 42, 45, 46, 47, 50; cloak, 45; coats, 6, 9, 19, 20, 22, 29, 37, 40, 41, 42, 46, 47, 50; *dhotī*, 18, 19, 24, 25, 28, 32, 36, 40, 41, 43, 47; fans, 44, 47; girdles, 4, 6, 47; head-gear, 29; jackets, 6, 9, 10, 12, 16, 20, 24; kirtle, 9; ribbons, 27, 28, 44, 50; robes, 8, 12, 21, 36, 41, 43; *sārī*, 24, 47; scarves, 19, 24, 31, 32; skirts, 4, 16, 28, 50; skull-cap, 26; socks, 41; straps, 37; tunic, 50; umbrella, 25; waist-strip, 17
Couch, representation of a, 7.
Court scene, a, 46–8
Crowns, representations of, 5, 6, 13, 15, 18, 27, 33, 37
Cups, representations of, 48, 49
Curtain, representation of a, 25
Curzon, Lord, vi
Cushions, representations of, 13, 15, 21, 39, 44, 47, 49
Cymbals, representations of, 12, 17, 22

Dagger, representation of a, 40
dān, alms, 24
Dancing-girls, paintings of, 12, 15–17

INDEX

dvārapāla, doorkeeper, painting of, 4
Decorative *motifs*, 48–51
Deer, representations of, 3, 3 *n.*[1]
Dharmacakra, a religious attitude, 34 *n.*[2]
ḍhol, drum, 17
dhotī (unsewn sheet, a garment), representations of the, 18, 19, 24, 25, 28, 32, 36, 40, 41, 43, 47
Dhyāna, a religious attitude, 34 *n.*[2]
Diadem, representation of a, 36
Dīghavū, painting of, 19, 19 *n.*[2]
Dishes, representations of, 16, 16 *n.*[2], 17
Divan, representation of a, 49
Domestic use, articles of, representations of: baskets, 17, 33, 40, 45; bolster, 50; bowl, 25; box, 44–5; caskets, 48; *chaurī*, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 21, 22, 24, 29, 45, 47; couch, 7; cups, 48, 49; curtain, 25; cushions, 13, 15, 21, 39, 44, 47, 49; dishes, 16, 16 *n.*[2], 17; divan, 49; ewers, 5, 25; flagon, 50; jar, 25; mattress, 49 *n.*[6]; pillows, 7, 47; pitchers, 8, 24; pots, 8, 17, 31; salver, 26–7; trays, 9, 11, 13, 15, 20, 24, 36, 39, 42, 46, 47, 48, 50; tumbler, 45; vessels, 11, 17, 25, 45, 47
Doorway, 8 *n.*
Doves, representations of, 33
Drums, representations of, 17, 22
Dwarfs, painting of, 5, 7, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 24, 29, 31, 39, 42, 45, 47, 51

Ear-rings, representations of, 9 *n.*[3], 15, 16, 36, 37, 43
Elephants, representations of, 18, 41, 43
Ellora, the art of, xv, 25
Embassy, Persian (?), 46–8
Eshin Sōzu, xviii
Ewers, representations of, 5, 25

Fans, representations of, 44, 47
Fight, a bull-, 51
Finger-ring, representation of a, 10
Flagon, representation of a, 50
Flutes, representations of, 17, 22
Four heads on a salver, 26–7
Fresco in the right aisle, 43–4

Gandhāra, the art of, xviii, xix
gandharvas, flying figures, 29
Gauze, representations of, 9, 12, 21, 28, 44
Geese, representations of, 50–1
Generals, paintings of, 10, 37
ghagrī, skirt, 16, 16 n.[3], 17 *n.*
Ghatotkach, cave at, 3 *n.*[1]
Gill, Major R., copies of the paintings by, v
Girdles, representations of, 4, 6, 47
Goad, representation of a, 41
Goats, representations of, 24
Gold brocades, 10, 42 *n.*[2]
Gossamer, representations of, 9
Griffiths, John, copies of the paintings by, v, 49
Grill-work, 11, 45
Guitar, representation of a, 17

Hair, treatment of the, in the paintings, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 19, 21, 25, 27, 32, 33, 34, 41
Hār, pearl-strings, 13
Harp, representation of a, 29
Hawk and the pigeon, the story of the, 4 *n.*[1]
Head-ornaments, representations of, 16, 42
Heads, four, on a salver, 26–7
Head-gear, representation of, 29
Hellenistic influence on the paintings, xv–xvi, 48
henna, the use of, in the toilette, 16, 16 *n.*[1], 18 *n.*[2], 21
Herringham, Lady, copies of the paintings by, v
Horses, representations of, 18, 22, 43
Hydari, Sir Akbar, vi
Hyderabad, H. E. H. the Nizam of, support of the work on the paintings by, v, vi

Indian art, xi–xix, 2
Italian affinities of the paintings, xvi–xvii, 31

Jackets, representations of, 6, 9, 10, 12, 16, 20, 24
janeo, sacred thread, 24
Japanese art, xv, xvi, xvii, xviii
Jar, representation of a, 25
Jewellery and ornaments, representations of: on objects, 5, 42, 51
— personal: armlets, 5, 10 *n.*[1], 15, 36; band, 37; bangles, 10 *n.*[1], 12, 15, 37, 43; chains, 10 *n.*[1], 12, 37; collar, 10 *n.*[1]; crowns, 5, 6, 13, 15, 18, 27, 33, 37; diadem, 36; head-ornaments, 16, 42; necklace, 5, 6, 12, 15 *n.*[2], 27, 42, 43; rings, ear-, 9 *n*[3], 15, 16, 36, 37, 43; —, finger-, 10; —, thumb-, 16; strings, 5, 8, 12, 13, 15, 27; tiaras, 10 *n.*[1], 36; unspecified, 4, 12, 13, 15, 18, 21, 33, 44; wristlets, 5, 15
jhumar, head-ornament, 42
Johnson, John, vi

kamkhwāb, gold or silver brocade, 42 *n.*[2]
kaṅṭhī, necklet, 15 *n.*[2]
karanphūl, ear-ring, 16
kaṛās, bangles, 10 *n.*[1], 43
Khusrau and Shīrīn (?), 48–51
King of Magadha, painting of the, 13
King, story of a Serpent, 38–43
kinnaras, heavenly musicians, 29
Kirtle, representation of a, 9
Kramrisch, Dr. Stella, on Indian sculpture, xv
kukṛī, sword, 19 *n.*[1]

lahaṅgā, skirt, 21 *n.*
Lion, representation of a, 29
Lotus-flowers, offering of, to the Bodhisattva, 35–7
Lustration and renunciation, 24–6

Mace-bearer, painting of a, 29
Magadha, King of, painting of the, 13
Mahājanaka, paintings of, *passim*
mahāwat, elephant-driver, 41
mālā, string of pearls, 15 *n.*[2]
Mangoes, representation of, 51
Marshall, Sir John, vi
mashrūʻ, silk, 42 *n.*[2]
Mattress, representation of a, 49 *n.*[6]
Michelangelo, xvi
Milne, J. A., vii
Miracle of Śrāvastī, 34–5

Miran, the wall-paintings at, xv
mirdang, double-drum, 17
missī, a cosmetic, 21
Monkeys, representation of, 29
Monsters, paintings of, 30–3
mudrās, religious attitudes, 34–5; Buddha in various, 34–5
Musical instruments, representations of: conches, 17, 22; cymbals, 12, 17, 22; drums, 17, 22; flutes, 17, 22; guitar, 17; harp, 29

Necklaces, representations of, 5, 6, 12, 15 *n.*^{2}, 27, 42, 43

Offering of lotus-flowers to the Bodhisattva, 35–7
Oldham, C. E. A. W., vii
oṛhnī, covering for the head, 21 *n.*
Ornaments. *See* Jewellery and ornaments
Orsini, Count, restoration of the paintings by, vi
Owl, representation of an, 31
Oxen, representations of, 14, 51

Padmapāṇi, Bodhisattva, 27–30
Painting, Indian, 2
Paithan, brocades of, 10
Palace scenes, 7–13, 15–17, 20–2, 44–5
pān, betel-leaf, the juice of, 21
Patterns on textiles, representations of, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 21, 36, 37, 39, 41, 46, 49 *n.*^{6}
Peacocks, representations of, 7, 29
Persian Embassy (?), 46–8
Pigeon, story of the, 4–7
Pillar, painting on the capital of a, 51
Pillows, representations of, 7, 47
Pine-apples, representation of, 51
pīpal tree, representation of the, 5, 6
piṛhīs, stools, 24
Pitchers, representations of, 8, 24
Pollaiuolo, xvi
Pomegranates, representation of, 51
Poniard, representation of a, 30
Pots, representations of, 8, 17, 31

qabā, coat, 46, 47, 50

Rājā going out on horse-back, 20–2
Rājā going out to attend the sermon of the Hermit, 18–20
Rajput paintings, xv
Raphael, 31
Ravenna, the mosaics of, xvii
Renunciation, lustration and, 24–6
Ribbons, representations of, 27, 28, 44, 50
Rings, representations of: ear-, 9 *n.*^{3}, 15, 16, 36, 37, 43; finger-, 10; thumb-, 16
Robes, representations of, 8, 12, 21, 36, 41, 43
Rodd, Sir Rennell, vi
Rosary, representation of a, 26

Saddle, representation of a, 19, 19 *n.*^{3}
Salver, four heads on a, 26–7; representation of a, 26–7
Śaṅkhapāla, the story of, 13–14, 13 *n.*^{1}
sarāsarī, head-ornament, 16
sārī, garment, representations of the, 24, 47
Scales, representations of weighing-, 4, 5
Scarves, representations of, 19, 24, 31, 32
Sculpture, the, at Ajanta, 2; Indian, xv
Serpent, story of the, 13–14
Serpent King, story of a, 38–43
Sharks, representations of, 23
Shields, representations of, 19, 50
Shipwreck, 22–3
Shīrīn, Khusrau and (?), 48–51
Śibi, Prince, the story of, 4–7
Signorelli, xvi, xvii
Silver brocades, 10, 42 *n.*^{2}
Sīvalī, Princess, paintings of, 7–8, 15–17
Skirts, representations of, 4, 16, 28, 50
Skull-cap, representation of a, 26
Snake-charmer, painting of a, 40
Socks, representation of, 41
Spear, representation of a, 31
Śrāvastī, miracle of, 34–5
Stchoukine, Ivan, on the paintings, xi–xii
Stein, Sir Aurel, vi, xv, xix

Story of a Serpent King, 38–43
Story of the pigeon, 4–7
Story of the serpent, 13–14
Straps, representations of, 37
Strings of pearls, representations of, 5, 8, 12, 13, 15, 27
Strzygowski, Prof., xvii
Sumanā, painting of, 39, 41
surma, eye-powder, 29
Swords, representations of, 19, 30, 31, 37, 40, 42, 43, 46, 50

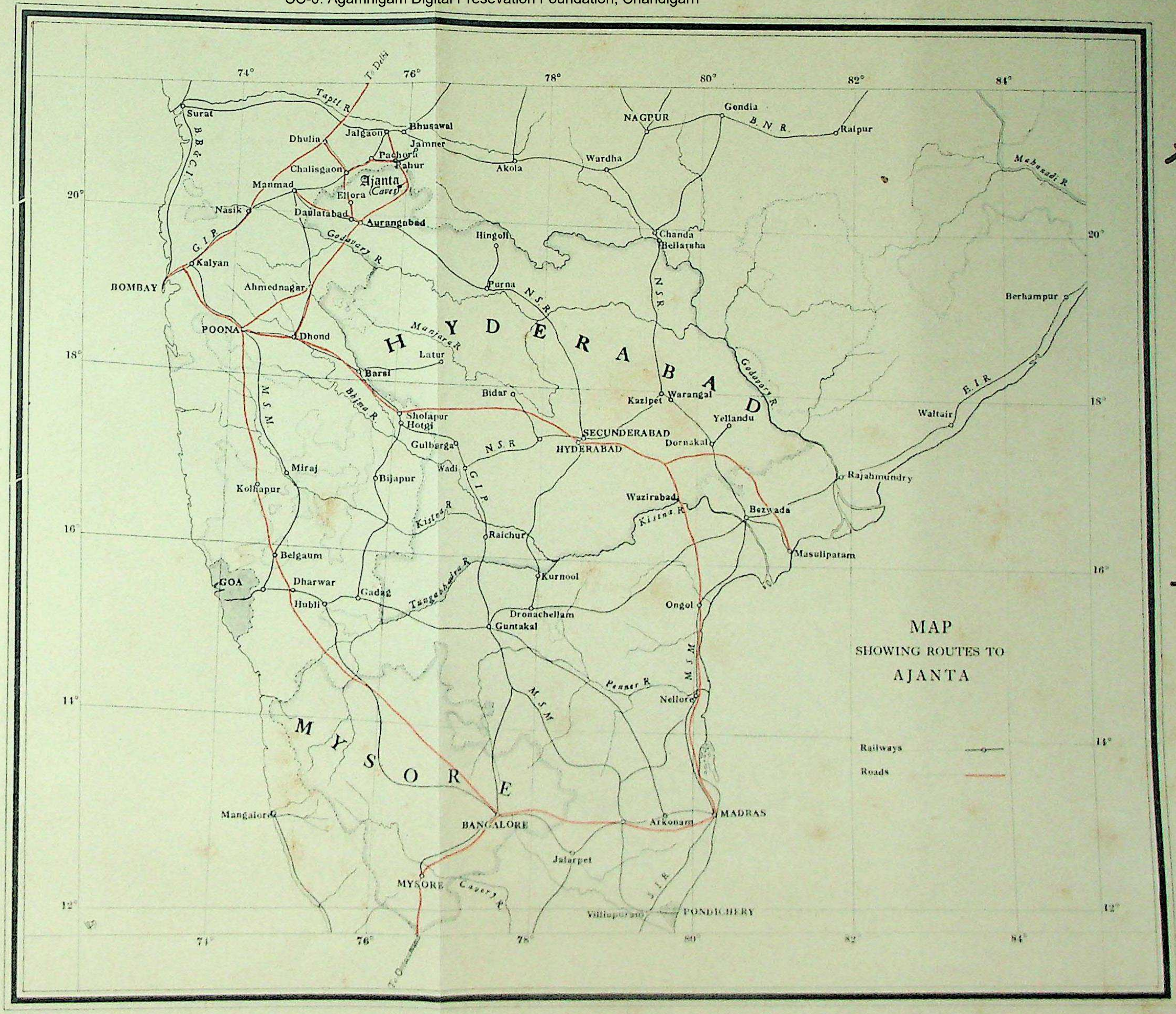
Temptation of Buddha, 30–3
Textiles, representation of patterns on, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 21, 36, 37, 39, 41, 46, 49 *n.*^{6}
Thrones, paintings of, 5, 15, 24, 26, 43, 47
Thumb-ring, representation of a, 16
Tiaras, representations of, 10 *n.*^{1}, 36
Tōba Sōjō, xvii
Trays, representations of, 9, 11, 13, 15, 20, 24, 36, 39, 42, 46, 47, 48, 50
Tumbler, metal, representation of a, 45
Tun-huang: banners from, xviii; paintings from, xv, xix
Tunic, representation of a, 50

Uggasena, Rājā, painting of, 40
Umbrella, representation of an, 25

Vajrapāṇi (?), painting of, 35–7
Vasey, E. L., colour-photographs of the paintings, 67, vi
Vessels, representations of, 11, 17, 35, 45, 47

Waist-strip, representation of a, 17
Weapons, representations of: bow and arrows, 33; dagger, 40; goad, 41; poniard, 30; shields, 19, 50; spear, 31; swords, 19, 30, 31, 37, 40, 42, 43, 46, 50
Witch, painting of a, 30
Wristlets, representations of, 5, 15
Wu Tao-tzŭ, xviii

yogīs, paintings of, 6–7, 7 *n.*^{2}


Railways
Roads
HYDERABAD
MYSORE
Surat
Dhulia
Jalgaon
Bhusawal
Jamner
Pachora
Pahur
Chalisgaon
Ajanta Caves
Manmad
Ellora
Nasik
Daulatabad
Aurangabad
Kalyan
BOMBAY
Ahmednagar
POONA
Dhond
Barsi
Latur
Sholapur
Hotgi
Gulbarga
Wadi
Bijapur
Miraj
Kolhapur
Belgaum
GOA
Dharwar
Hubli
Gadag
Raichur
Kurnool
Dronachellam
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Mangalore
BANGALORE
MYSORE
Jalarpet
Arkonam
MADRAS
Villupuram
PONDICHERY
Nellore
Ongol
Masulipatam
Bezwada
Wazirabad
HYDERABAD
SECUNDERABAD
Bidar
Kazipet
Warangal
Yellandu
Dornakal
Rajahmundry
Waltair
Berhampur
Hingoli
Purna
Akola
Wardha
NAGPUR
Gondia
Raipur
Chanda
Bellarsha
Tapti R.
Godavary R.
Manjara R.
Bhima R.
Kistna R.
Tungabhadra R.
Penner R.
Cavery R.
Mahanadi R.
To Delhi
To Ootacamund
B.B.&C.I.
G.I.P.
M.S.M.
N.S.R.
B.N.R.
E.I.R.
S.I.R.
71°
76°
78°
80°
82°
84°
20°
18°
16°
14°
12°

MAP
SHOWING ROUTES TO
AJANTA